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**NUMBER
SIX**

**FALL
1992**

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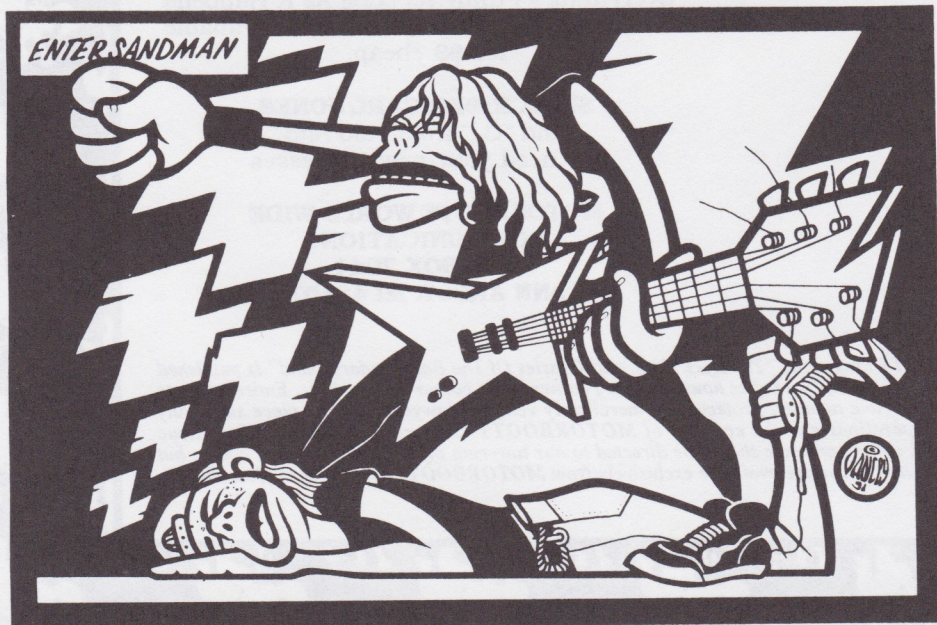
LOOSE

Rupaul as
Starbooty:
not an
authentic
female.
Henry: the
100 years'
"My War"



■ If "too much of a good thing" is a bad thing, then too much of a bad thing is surely more than the world can be expected to bear. Unfortunately, Henry Rollins doesn't agree, and his ever-expanding, monomaniacal output proves it. Having already beaten the dead horses of "rage" and "alienation" into veritable puddles of glue, Hank just keeps flogging, prompting us to provide this tally of key themes from a random sampling of his work.

SOURCE	"death"/ "to kill"	"hurt"/ "pain"	"lonely"/ "alone"	"hate"	Expression of Authenticity	Hubert Selby Name-drop
<i>Black Coffee Blues</i>	100	35	37	47	23	04
<i>Bang</i>	130	33	07	41	25	02
<i>One From None</i>	83	36	22	35	40	0
Liner notes from 7-hour spoken word opus	01	02	0	03	02	01



■ Although Metallica's number-one hit "Enter Sandman" was "borrowed" note-for-note from Excel's not-so-number-one hit "Tapping Into the Emotional Void," no one has yet raised a stink—least of all Excel, who have nary a disparaging word for their more popular, more powerful purloiners.

■ Fresh from taping a special at HBO Studios, Hammer gums down some brine shrimp and luxuriates in his tireless legitimacy. Suddenly, there's a knock at the door and Hammer's road manager steps in. Behind him, a man sporting garter snakeskin pants, dazzling Eltonesque glasses and a king-sized jehri-jelled fright wig enters the room and introduces himself as the megabasstron magus, William "Bootsy" Collins. Hammer looks up at the Starchild and discreetly re-inserts his bridge, and the performers quickly hit it off and begin chatting.

Figuring legitimacy more or less equals being accepted by the legitimate, Hammer shoots his

BOOTS

mouth off the next day, bragging about his hour-long brush with Bootzilla. It isn't until later that evening, when Hammer tries fruitlessly to reacquaint himself with William Collins, that he slaps his swollen head and thinks out loud, "Improper! I've been had!" Not only is this Bootsy taller and thinner than the guy from the day before, but he's wearing genuine rattlesnake-skin pants and all his incisors are in place.

Hammer may have felt like a chump, but at least he was in good company. Deee-Lite almost put the bogus Bootsy in a video; Johnny Carson had him slated for an appearance on *The Tonight Show*; Bill Graham not only booked him for a benefit, but also gave him a few thousand dollars to find more acts; rap pioneer Gerardo put him in his band on the *Arsenio* show, only to have the Bootpretender steal hundreds of dollars in equipment before the gig; Boo-Yaa Tribe, The Jungle Brothers, Digital Underground, and A Tribe Called Quest all had the wool pulled over their eyes; and one would-be Bride of Funkenstein even married him last June, hoping he'd get her a record contract.

"I've been with Bootsy for over four years, and it's been going on that long," Collins' manager Dana Davis told MOTORBOOTY. "There's been an imposter out there for seventeen years, but for the last two or three it's been real heavy. We've even called the FBI."

Being quicker, sharper, and generally more honest than the FBI, MOTORBOOTY recently talked to "Bootsy" in his Harlem hideout:

"Hi, is Bootsy there?"

(*mocking tone*) "Is Bootsy there? Is Bootsy there? Shit. No, he's not here right now."

"Do you know when he'll be coming back?"

"He's taping a special in Washington right now. Next week he's going to London to talk with Phil Collins about playing with Brand X. You know they're putting Brand X back together?"

"Get out. Who am I speaking to?"

"Leroy, Bootsy's bodyguard." (*a common faux Bootsy alias - ed.*)

"You know there's been a fake Bootsy running around?"

"No shit. We've got the police after him, though. You know, I've got a beautiful girl here



and she's started taking her clothes off. I better go now."

In the interest of journalistic toughness, MOTORBOOTY also talked to someone who appeared to be the real Bootsy. "I once had a Leroy who worked for me, but I don't know anything about this guy. I'm flattered someone would go to extremes to be like me, but when he starts to make my name look bad, that's another thing."

Unfortunately, Collins can't prosecute because he personally hasn't been defrauded. Still, having a stunt Bootsy isn't without its benefits—after blowing off a Central Park gig last summer,



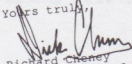
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

Mr. Eric Boucher
c/o Alternative Tentacles
P.O. Box 11458
San Francisco CA 94101

Dear "Jello":

Enclosed please find a check for your services rendered during the Persian Gulf conflict. The check compensates you for the following: (1) production costs for your "Die for Oil, Sucker" record; and (2) time and labor in providing us with names, dates, addresses, etc. of anti-war events and agitators. With regard to the former, we agree with you that the song helped prevent the anti-war position from rising above the level of simplistic sloganeering and reinforced your public identity as a genuine spokesman for the radical left. With regard to the latter, your data helped us to keep wartime dissent at a minimum. In conclusion, we would like to personally thank you for doing your share to help our nation rid itself, once and for all, of its lingering "Vietnam Syndrome."

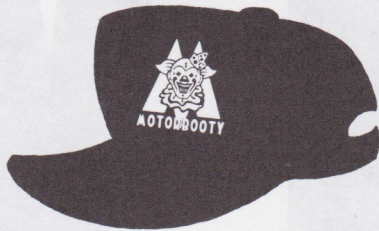
Please stay well and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Yours truly,

Richard Cheney
Secretary of Defense

Jello's war booty

Bootsy shirked responsibility by blaming his evil twin. As of yet, no one's sure which one's responsible for *Oh No, It's Bootsy!*, but we prefer to give the real Bootsy the benefit of the doubt. —Reported by Neil Strauss

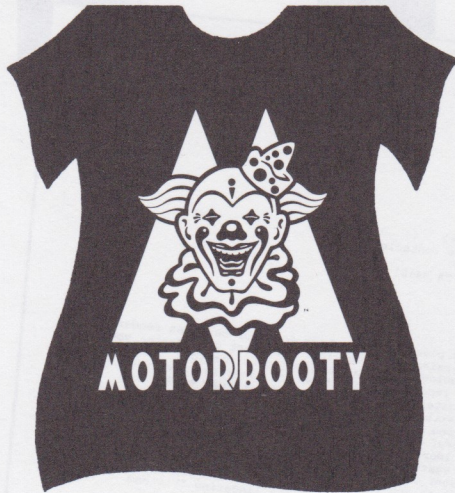
■ While fellow ex-Hüsker "Du it to me one more time" wild-sider B. Mould has ridden his *Black Sheets of Rain* right into the pages of *Teen Beat* (or at least *Option*), Grant Hart seems intent on showing himself to be the Ringo (or at least the Steven Adler) of the band. When carousing with Hart after a triumphant Nova Mob gig in Chicago, an unsuspecting fan made the mistake of telling Hart she was a medical resident. Hart immediately set upon the prospective Dr. Benway (or at least Nurse Ratchet), begging for prescriptions of any and every narcotic around and frantically asking about the nearest 24 hour pharmacy. When it became clear that the young sawbones wasn't about to sacrifice her future at the altar of Hart's pathetic jones, Hart broke down, spinning a long, tearful tale of his epic battles with Mr. Brownstone. His audience unmoved, Hart then lowered the stakes, driving his crestfallen fan from the room with pleas for "Efferdent, Dones Pills, Minoxidil, anything..."



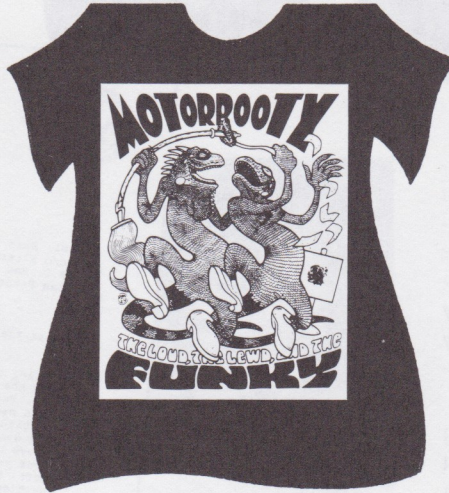
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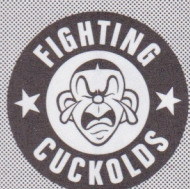
CAROLINE

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Photo: Mick Rock

minor league standings



With the feeding frenzy for bonus babies heating up, we thought it a good time to monitor the competition in the Independent League, the farm club system that keeps the majors stocked with hot young prospects and next big things. While the standings this year look more like the NFL's vision of parity than a pennant race—from the winning percentages (calculated from the number of players who've gone on to the big leagues) of these clubs you'd swear they were all based in Cleveland—these kids know the stakes are lucrative, and there's no doubt they'll take this contest right down to the wire. Likewise, batting averages (output by players who've been promoted to "the show") have yet to get north of the Mendoza line (.200), but it's early in the game and the fall stretch is still ahead.

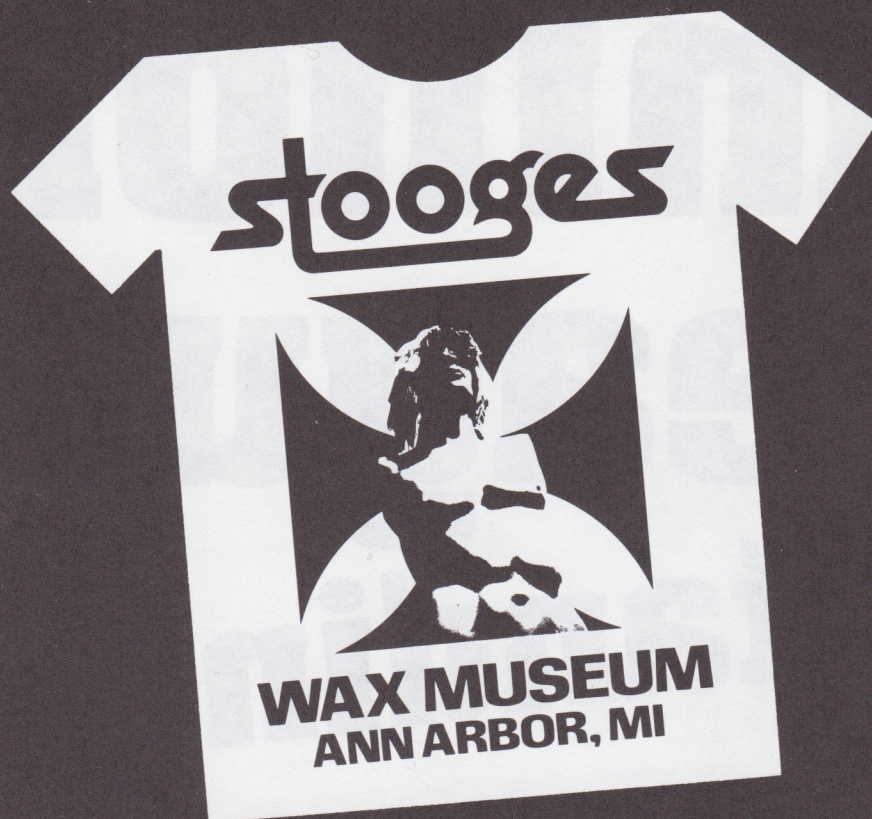
Of course, scouting the minors for talent is tricky—for every Nirvana there are a dozen Soul Asylums—but if an indie phenom ships tinfoil instead of platinum, they can always be sent packing to the God-forsaken backwater they came from. And hey—there's always next season.

WESTERN DIVISION

TEAM	HITS	MISSSES	PCT.	TEAM BATTING AVG.
Twin Tone Plaid Sox	08	22	.267	.382
Sub Pop Yutzes	05	27	.156	.170
SST Bogarians	10	76	.132	.181
Touch & Go Tightly Whiteys	02	23	.080	.175
Amrep Lugers	01	12	.077	.036

EASTERN DIVISION

TEAM	HITS	MISSSES	PCT.	TEAM BATTING AVG.
Wax Trax Travoltas	06	27	.182	.262
Caroline Cherry Pickers	08	40	.167	.205
Homestead Fighting Cuckolds	09	66	.120	.157
Matador Doormats	01	11	.083	.077
Dischord Party Poopers	00	34	.000	.000



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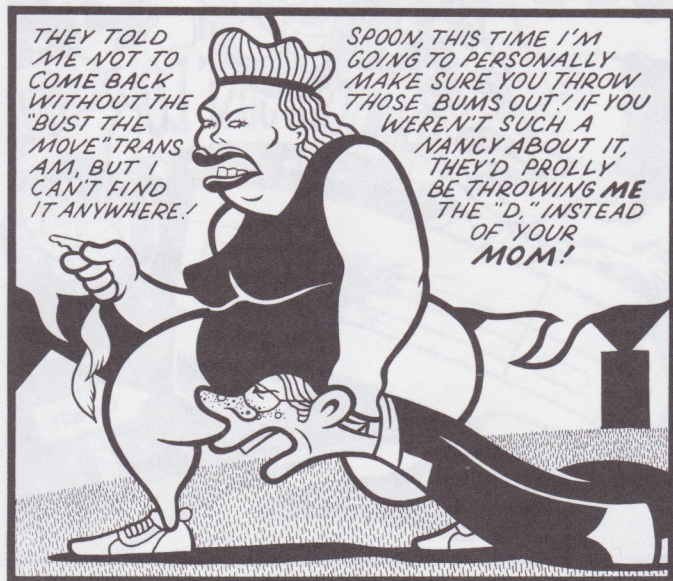
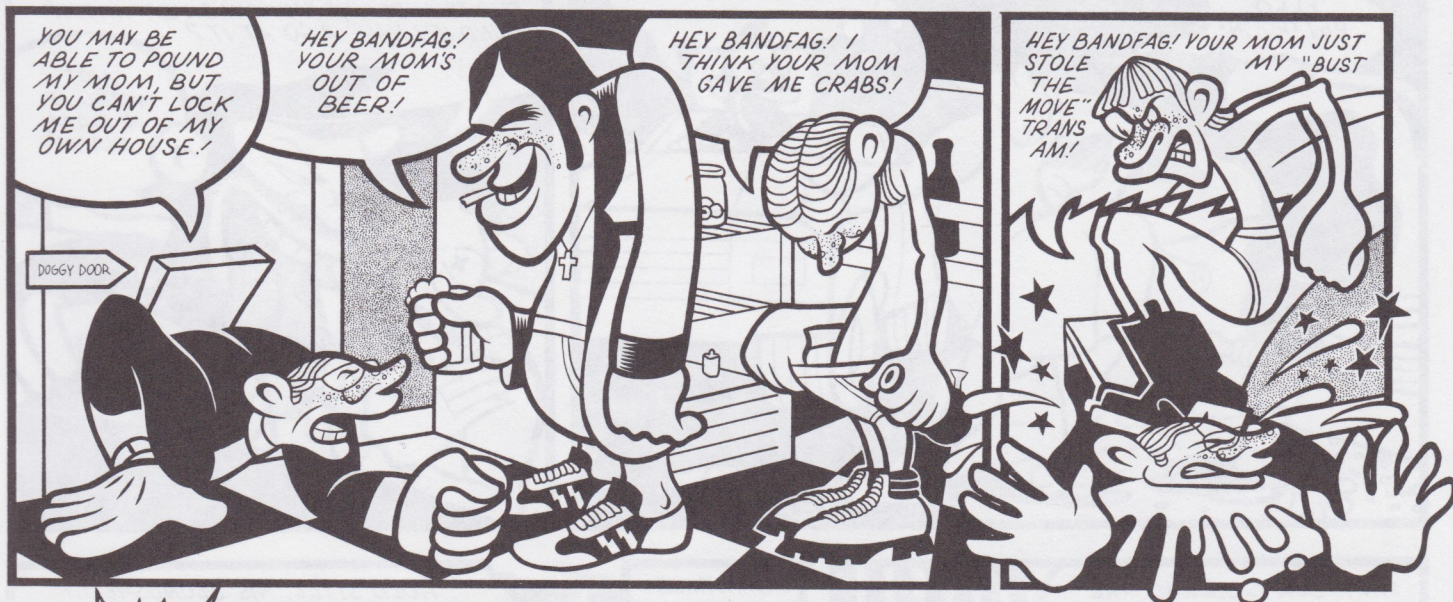
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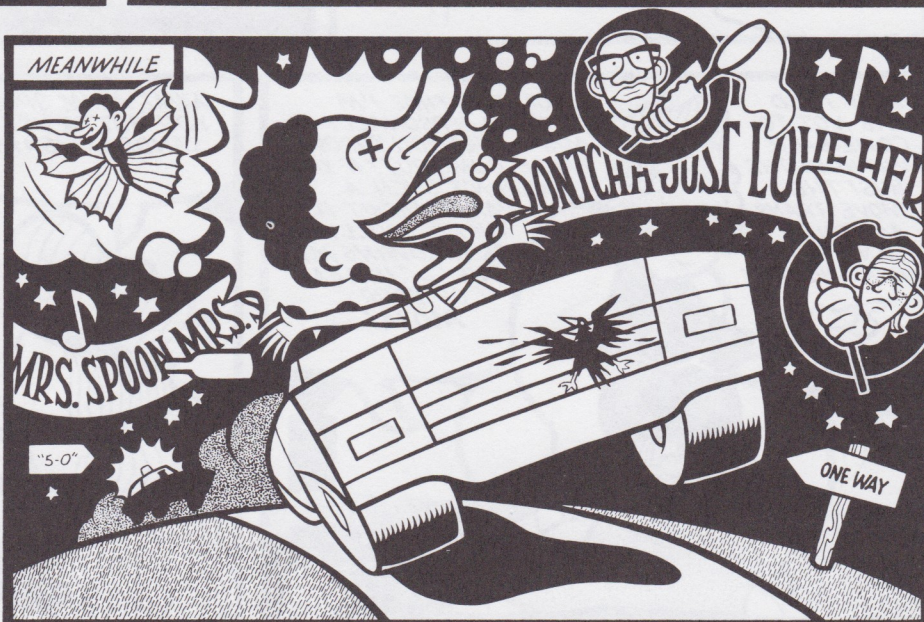
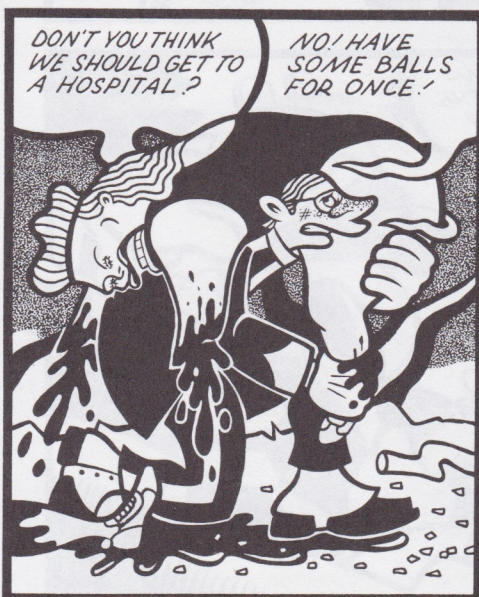
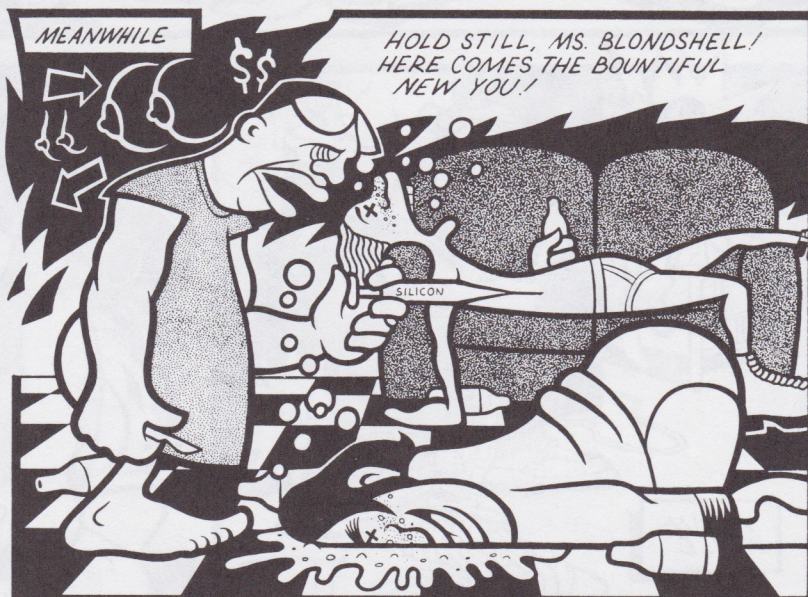
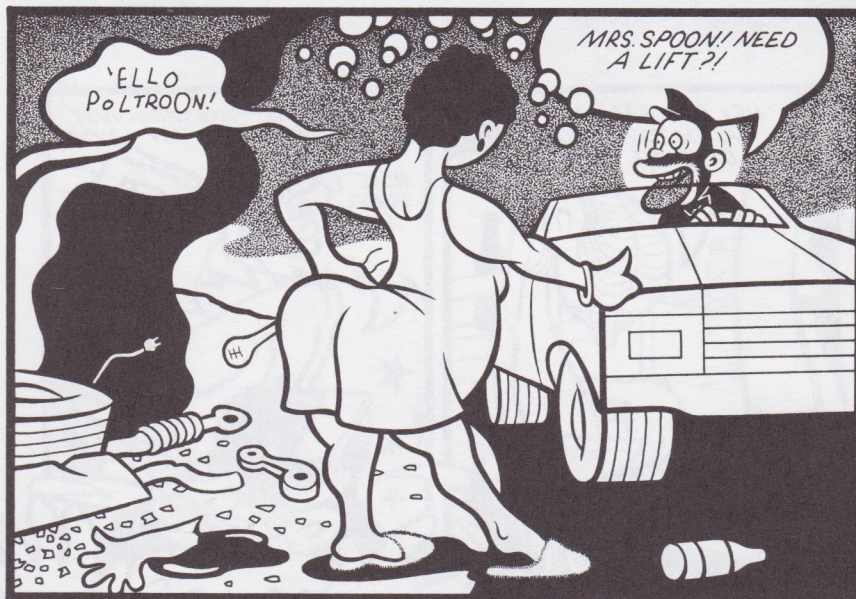
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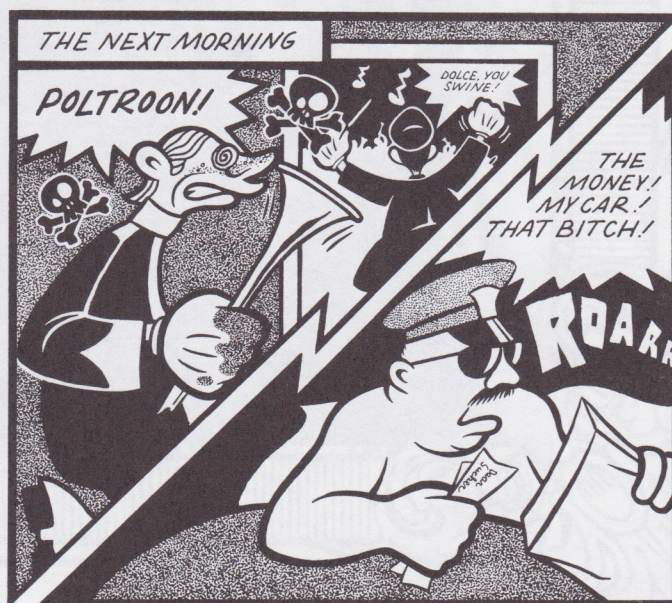
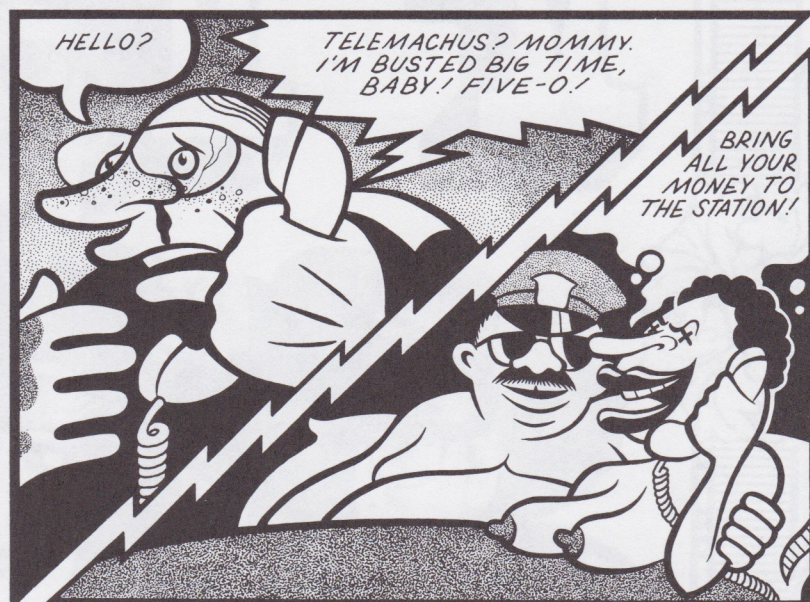
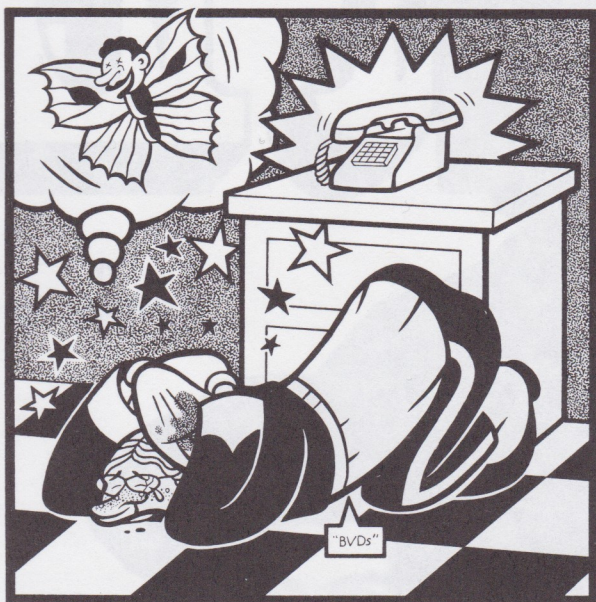
THE ROMAN SPRING









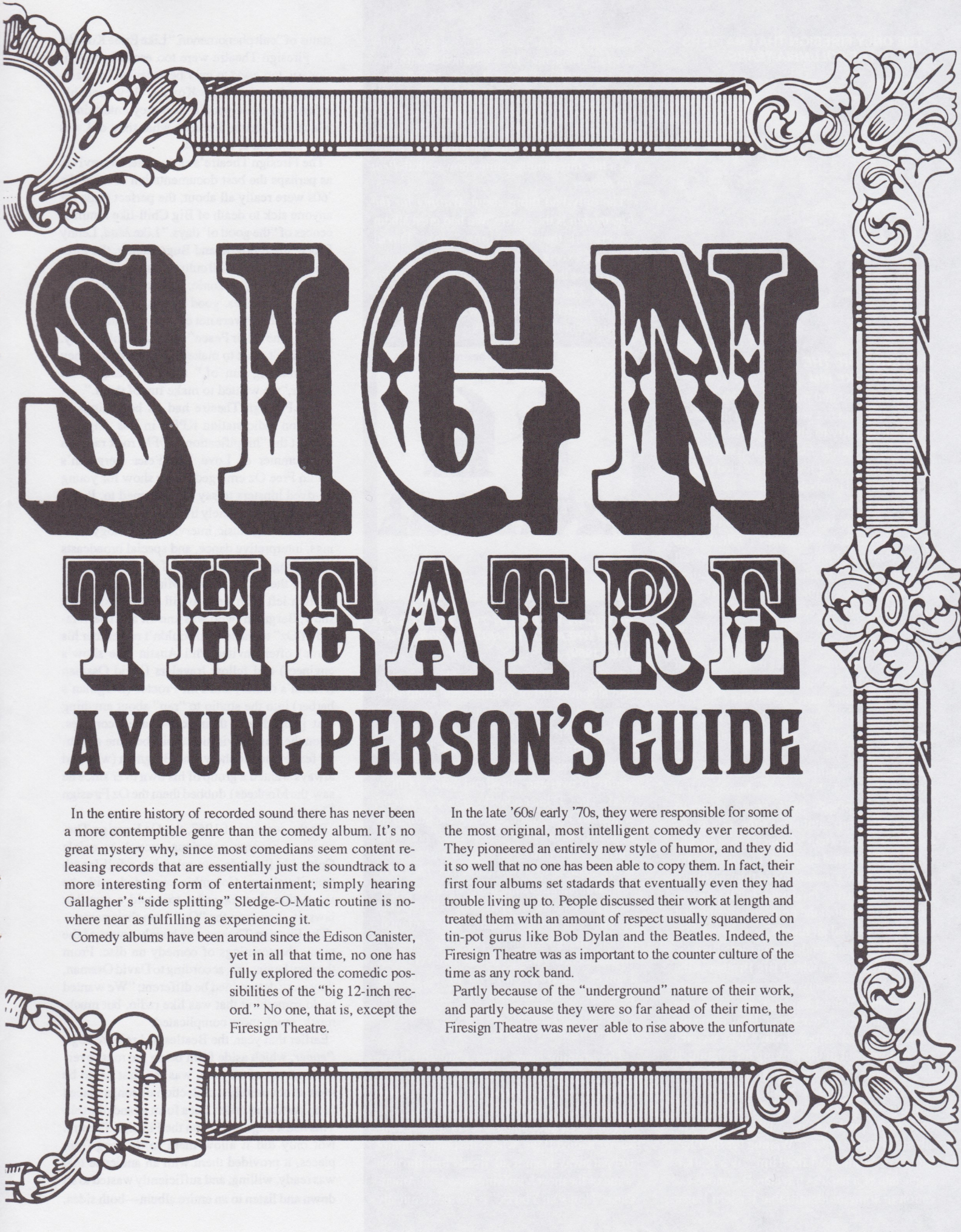


THE

FIRE

BY
DAVID MERLINE





SIGN THEATRE A YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE

In the entire history of recorded sound there has never been a more contemptible genre than the comedy album. It's no great mystery why, since most comedians seem content releasing records that are essentially just the soundtrack to a more interesting form of entertainment; simply hearing Gallagher's "side splitting" Sledge-O-Matic routine is nowhere near as fulfilling as experiencing it.

Comedy albums have been around since the Edison Canister, yet in all that time, no one has fully explored the comedic possibilities of the "big 12-inch record." No one, that is, except the Firesign Theatre.

In the late '60s/ early '70s, they were responsible for some of the most original, most intelligent comedy ever recorded. They pioneered an entirely new style of humor, and they did it so well that no one has been able to copy them. In fact, their first four albums set standards that eventually even they had trouble living up to. People discussed their work at length and treated them with an amount of respect usually squandered on tin-pot gurus like Bob Dylan and the Beatles. Indeed, the Firesign Theatre was as important to the counter culture of the time as any rock band.

Partly because of the "underground" nature of their work, and partly because they were so far ahead of their time, the Firesign Theatre was never able to rise above the unfortunate

THE ONLY FIRESIGN THAT MATTERS: THE COLUMBIA YEARS

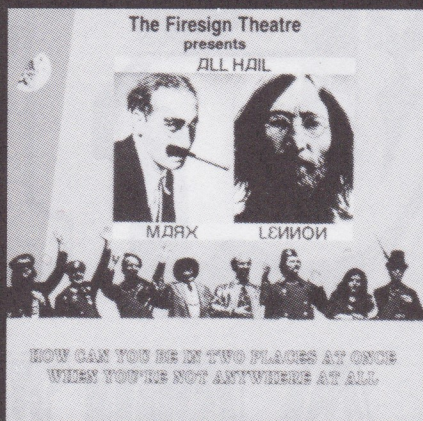


WAITING FOR THE ELECTRICIAN OR SOMEONE LIKE HIM (1968)

Firesign's first and most accessible album. Because they had not yet developed their technique sufficiently to allow them to write album-long scenarios, *Electrician* contains four separate and more or less unconnected pieces. "Temporarily Humboldt County" deals with the history of the American Indians, covering everything from their attempted conversion by the Spanish missionaries ("Oh, by the way—domini, domini, domini—you're all Catholics now.") to their constant relocation by the U.S. Government ("It behooves me upon this historic occasion to dedicate the Stinking Desert National Historical Indian Monument and Cobalt Testing Range"). "W.C. Fields Forever" takes us on a tour of a commune, where we meet such colorful characters as Medium Raray the Mystic Chef and Gabby the Sacred Cowboy, who shows us the Last Chance Saloon, where people drink Third Red Eye and play Ten Card Tarot—pentacles wild. "W.C. Fields Forever" presents the whole New Age schmeer as if it were a lost episode of *F-Troop*, correctly exposing the "hip" attitudes of the '60s as clichés-to-be. The extent to which Firesign ridiculed such cultural icons as Timothy Leary and Wavy Gravy seems more than justified, given the benefit of hindsight, but it was significantly unusual at the time, considering that all of that "spinted gu-hu-ery" was so hot. "Le Trente-Huit Cunegonde" is an Orwellian vision of the future in which Big Brother is the Zig Zag Man and everyone is groovy: parents ("Malcolm X John Lennon, come on in and dig your mother."), teachers ("How come we found you in a classroom today? Why weren't you hanging out in the parking lot relating to the other kids?"), and even cops ("Come over here, I wanna do a thing with you."). "Cunegonde's" concept of mandatory non-conformity predates "p.c." by 25 years. The album's longest piece, "Waiting for the Electrician or Someone Like Him," is a Kafkaesque tale of a hapless traveler, P., whose vacation in some unidentifiable Eastern Euro-

pean city turns into a nightmare of mistranslations and innuendo. He's detained by customs officials ("This photograph doesn't look anything like you, now does it sir?") "Well, it's an old picture." "Precisely. Would you mind waiting over there?"), thrown in jail, faces execution, and becomes the unwilling guest on a life-threatening game show called *Beat the Reaper*.

The only bad thing about *Waiting for the Electrician* is the cover. "We had great album covers all the way along," says David Ossman, "except for the first one. I think some people lost their jobs over that one." *Waiting for the Electrician*, although sufficiently funny, merely points the way towards the Firesign Theatre's best work.



HOW CAN YOU BE IN TWO PLACES AT ONCE WHEN YOU'RE NOT ANYWHERE AT ALL (1969)

As the title implies, Firesign Theatre's second album is full of parallels and contradictions, and is at once their most commercial and most experimental work. *How Can You Be* is a prime example of both the Firesign's painful attention to detail and their remarkable ability to overstate the significance of their work. The CD liner notes to *How Can You Be*, written by Phil Austin, describe the numerous complexities of "How Can You Be" and "The Further Adventures of Nick Danger," even going so far as to compare them to *The Odyssey*. Although there are many interesting parallels between the two pieces, it's difficult not to think that many of them were accidental. When Firesign's radio show, Radio Free Oz, was cancelled, Firesign put the leftover "Nick Danger" on *How Can You Be* so that the public wouldn't be denied this comedic gem, and, more importantly, so that they wouldn't have to write anything new.

The opening piece, "How Can You Be in Two Places at Once When You're Not Anywhere at All" is a Hunter S. Thompsonian journey through the heart of the American Dream, seen through the eyes of a naive consumer named Babe, whose desperate attempt to "get away from it all" leads him through some of the most horrifying aspects of Americana. "How Can You Be" is the most critically

status of "cult phenomenon." Like Ernie Kovacs, the Firesign Theatre were too esoteric, too visionary, too *good* to ever be accepted by mainstream America. Like Kovacs, they probably influenced more people than they entertained, which is a shame because what they did was entertainment at its finest.

The Firesign Theatre's early material survives as perhaps the best documentation of what the '60s were really all about, the perfect tonic for anyone sick to death of Big Chill-like reminiscences of "the good ol' days." Like *Mad*, Lenny Bruce, the Stooges, and Bugs Bunny, the Firesign Theatre defied all cultural stereotypes. They were sarcastic, sardonic, and anarchistic in an age of good vibes, good karma, and knee-jerk pacifism. They were not concerned with merely echoing the "Hair Peace" sentiments of the day. "We didn't want to make fun of the things they were making fun of," mused Firesign Phil Proctor, "we wanted to make fun of them."

The Firesign Theatre had its beginnings in 1966, on radio station KPFK in Los Angeles. Amidst the "hippification" of FM rock radio in pre-Summer of Love LA, Peter Bergman's Radio Free Oz emerged as the show for young tie-dyed hipsters to say they listened to. Radio Free Oz was supremely trendy and wildly eclectic—featuring music, interviews, astrology readings, interpretive dance, and special broadcasts like the legendary simulcast of the first performance of the San Francisco Mime Troupe.

Often left with time to kill at the end of his show, Bergman (who was known as "The Wizard of Oz" to those who couldn't remember his name) often invited Phil Austin (the show's engineer) and fellow travelers David Ossman (Austin's dealer) and Phil Proctor (Bergman's barber) into the studio to "rap" about anything that popped into their acid-soaked cortexes. Soon these improvisational bits became a regular feature on the show, and Bergman (who had always wanted a group of his own ever since he saw the Monkees) dubbed them the Oz Firesign Theatre.

By the summer of 1967, the Oz Firesign Theatre had become notorious enough to cajole Columbia Records into releasing a full-length comedy album. Columbia conceded, with the stipulation that, in order to avoid a possible lawsuit, they drop the "Oz" from their name.

The Firesign Theatre was keenly aware of the many shortcomings of comedy on disc. From the very beginning, according to David Ossman, they were determined be different: "We wanted to do something that was like radio, but much, much, much more complicated."

Earlier that year, the Beatles had released *Sgt. Pepper*, which aside from being the most overrated album of all time, was the first LP to be seen as not merely a collection of songs placed in no particular order, but a form in and of itself. This had a huge impact on the Firesign Theatre. Not only did it allow them to do long-form pieces, it provided them with an audience that was ready, willing, and sufficiently wasted to sit down and listen to an entire album—both sides,



Firesigns, from left: Austin, Proctor, Bergman (bald), Ossman.

all the way through.

Firesign's relationship with Columbia was an unusual one. In 1968, Columbia was primarily interested in putting out records by Andy Williams and Jack Jones. The Rock 'n Roll Department, to which Firesign belonged, was relatively new, and was thought of as "nothing but a bunch of pot-heads and pill freaks," but Columbia's attitude was "if they make money, leave them alone." Firesign's contract, which had Columbia picking up the tab for unlimited studio time, amounted to a creative carte blanche. They were working with state-of-the-art four-track recording equipment and had access to all the old CBS radio sound effect devices, although they often preferred to make their own effects, using everything from rollerskates to migrant workers.

The group deliberately made records that had to be listened to several times in order to catch everything that was going on, layering voices upon voices upon sound effects upon voices. Often there are so many voices talking at once it's hard to understand what anyone is saying. It's difficult to describe the Firesign style, except to say that they followed in the tradition of the radio dramas of the '40s and '50s. But they were similar to these in form only, and then only marginally so. Try to imagine if Orson Welles' *Mercury Theatre* teamed up with Salvador Dali and W.C. Fields, and you still won't have a very good idea what the Firesign Theatre were like.

Take "Temporarily Humboldt County," the opening piece from *Waiting For the Electrician*

or *Someone Like Him*. It dramatizes the colonization of the New World from the viewpoint of the American Indians (sorry, Indigenous Persons). It covers a span of time from the late 1400s to the late 1960s and does it in about ten minutes. It begins with the Spaniards' first encounter with the Indians ("Corn? Now we can make tortillas!"), takes us through the settlers' ("Corn? Now we can make whiskey!"), and continues on to the hippies' ("Got any pie-oh-tee?"), stopping along the way to include this remarkably swift telling of the signing of the peace treaties: "My fellow redskins, speaking for the Great White Father in Washington and all the American people, let me say that we respect you savages for your native ability to instantly adapt and survive in whatever god-forsaken wilderness we move you to. Out there. Sign here."

"Humboldt County" moves along at a lightning pace that was typical of all the Firesign Theatre's early work. On any one album they used and discarded dozens of routines, while most comedians hammer away at the same hackneyed schtick for decades. Cheech and Chong based their whole interminable career on two of the Firesign's most incidental characters—Pico and Alvarado, the drug-addled soldiers from *Don't Crush That Dwarf, Hand Me the Pliers*.

Besides their various radio and comedic heroes, the four were also heavily influenced by artists who worked in other fields—John Cage, William S. Burroughs, Hieronymus Bosch, among others. Taking cues from many of these

studied of all the Firesign Theatre's works, and rightfully so. From the mantra-like sales pitch of used car salesman Ralph Spoilsport ("Wire wheel spoke fenders two-way sneezethrough windvent star-studded mudguards sponge-coated edible steering column") to the talking freeway signs ("Clean up Armenia—Get a harelip!"), to the song that answers the musical question "Mr. Policeman, what makes America great?" ("It's spics and wops and niggers and kikes with noses as long as your arm/ It's micks and chinks and gooks and geeks and honkies who never left the farm.") to Spoilsport's oddly emotive reading of the closing passage of *Ulysses*, "How Can You Be" serves up enough literary and cultural allusions to last a lunchtime. "Nick Danger," on the other hand, is Firesign's most lightweight piece. In the liner notes, Austin describes "How Can You Be" as "stream-of-consciousness," and "Nick Danger" as "stream-of-self-consciousness." A tribute to radio, "Nick Danger" is marginally concerned with a luckless gumshoe's pursuit of a missing person, but plot and form become so intertwined as to be indistinguishable. All the clichés of *radio noir* are not only used but exposed ("If you're so smart, why don't you pick up your cues faster?" "Are those my cues?" "Yes, and they must be dry by now. Why don't you pick them up out of the cellophane before they scorch?"). Much of the humor is routine ("They were very attached to each other." "Where?" "At the wrists and ankles."), but there are enough Beatles references ("His story had more holes than Albert

Hall.") and surreal jokes ("Where am I?" "You can't get there from here.") to keep any high-on in stitches till he crashes.

On *How Can You Be* the Firesign Theatre manage to pull off the very difficult task of presenting sophisticated *highbrow* humor and sophomoric *lowbrow* humor back to back, combining the two, creating a synthesis that is uniquely *unibrow*.



DON'T CRUSH THAT DWARF, HAND ME THE PLIERS (1970)

Though it's difficult to neatly summarize just what the Firesign Theatre did, it's safe to say they did it best on *Dwarf*. Like Jan Van Eyck's *Betrothal of Arnolfini*, Blue Cheer's *Vincebus Eruptum*, and the abortion episode of *Hello Larry*, *Dwarf* is a seminal work.

Simply put, *Dwarf* is the story of a man, George Leroy Tirebiter (a.k.a. Peorgie Tirebiter, a.k.a. Lt. Tirebiter, a.k.a. Dave Casman), who not only watches, but *lives* his life on TV. His long night of TV viewing takes him through all the different stages of his life: he sees himself as a blacklisted actor who receives a "stab from the past" on a kind of *This Is Your Life* show; as a character in the Paranoid Pictures release *High School Madness*, one of "those stupid but loveable Peorgie and Mudhead movies;" as a boldly ambivalent presidential candidate whose slogan is "You can believe me, because I never lie, and I'm always right;" and as the reluctant soldier in the "film" *Parallel Hell* who can't even bring himself to say the word "kill."

The concept of *Dwarf* grew out of an RFO piece called "A Life in the Day," which chronicled a single day's programming, from sign-on to sign-off. Firesign expanded this story to encompass the entire life of George Tirebiter as well as such varied themes as loyalty, individuality, and (of course) drugs. On *Dwarf*, Firesign make fun of everything from TV news ("Big light in sky slated to appear in East.") to TV commercials ("Ersatz Brothers Coffee: The real one. Look for the can in the plain brown can.") to TV evangelists ("Pastor Rod Flash has been up for weeks, but he's coming down now!"). The plotline jumps haphazardly, switching from one story to the

FIRESIGN THEATRE: HOWDY ALIENS!



Ossman welcomes aliens

next so many times that it's difficult to tell one scenario from the other. While this may sound like an exercise in pretentious excess, *Dwarf* is actually one of Firesign's most enjoyable albums, containing many of their best loved bits, like Principal Poop's address to the "fellow kids" of Morse Science High (which is constantly interrupted by shouts of "Fuck You!" "Eat it raw!" and "What is Reality?") While *Dwarf* is a far cry from the sort of simple-minded buffoonery that usually passes for comedy, people like you may think it's funny anyway.



I THINK WE'RE ALL BOZOS ON THIS BUS (1971)

Combining their affection for such seemingly incompatible concepts as the World's Fairs of the early 1900s and the Bozo the Clown children's records of the 1950s, the Firesign Theatre created a vision of the future that's part Aldous Huxley, part George Orwell, and part Larry Harmon.

The story follows a lapsed Bozo named Clem and his witless companion Barney on a journey to a surreal Future Fair where the capacity for fun is severely regulated: everyone must be a clown, and everyone must endure "government-inflicted stimulation." Fairgoers are entertained by holograms of Western-garbed vegetables who sing a Gene Autry-like song called "Back to the Shadows Again" ("Out where an Injun's your friend/ where the vegetables are green/ and you can pee right into the stream.") and direct people to the Fair's numerous attractions. Clem takes the "Funway" to the "Path of Science" (where he is introduced to Sir Sidney Fudd's First Prin-

avant-gardists, Firesign often used the restrictions imposed by the LP as a source for their material. The title piece from *Electrician*, for example, starts out sounding like a language instruction record and instantly turns into a dramatic piece: "Welcome to side five. Follow along in your books as we learn three new words in Turkish: Towel . . . Bath . . . Border . . . May I see your passport please?"

At this point the sounds of a train station are heard and the words "May I see your passport please" are not directed at the listener (as on a language album), but at a character in the story which has unexpectedly begun to unfold.

Because they were working in a purely aural medium, Firesign were able to play with many genres, jumping back and forth from one to the next. Although their quick-paced wordplay often created the illusion of improvisation, the writing process was deliberate and methodical, and any improvisation that was done usually resulted in a rewrite. The four often relied on chance as a source for inspiration, particularly when unable to come up with beginnings or endings. Often times they went to extremes as ridiculous as throwing the I Ching, drawing lots, or listening to Jose Jimenez albums.

In the early days, much of the writing was done at a place called the Farm, a "ramshackle semi-



"Wacky."

commune" that was home to Phil Austin and Peter Bergman (and any self-styled dharma bum who needed a place to "crash"). These writing sessions consisted largely of all four members tossing out ideas, each trying to "out-wit" the other. Whatever made all four of them laugh was kept, the rest was dumped. As a result of this self-imposed "challenge," the group's creative whole was often greater than the sum of its parts, a phenomenon that they themselves recognized and referred to as the "fifth guy." Created out of a combination of intense creative energy and really excellent hashish, this "fifth guy" was the one who came up with funnier jokes than any of them could have written on their own. They even named their company 4 or 5 Crazy Guys Publishing after this phenomenon, and not, as some have suggested, after a Steve Martin routine.

This kind of group writing is fairly common; *Saturday Night Live* as well as most network sitcoms usually employ a "team" of writers. What was uncommon about the Firesign Theatre was that a) they wrote and performed all their own material and b) the material was funny. Unlike traditional comedy groups, whose members all have predetermined roles, Firesign had no straight man and no front man—they all did a variety of characters and voices, and they all shared the writing credit equally.

Assuming that no one would be listening anyway, they felt free to make fun of anyone and anything they wanted, and do it any way they wanted. People were listening, however, and due to the fact that many didn't realize that they were the ones being made fun of, coolniks from Harvard to Hempfield began to turn on to the Firesign Theatre. By the time they released *How Can You Be in Two Places at Once When You're Not Anywhere at All*, Firesign had amassed an

impressive cult following.

In 1970, they took their show on the road, playing mostly colleges and universities. They were, according to Phil Austin, "part of a rock and roll phenomenon," and this was evident in the type of audiences their concerts drew. "Crowds were raucous," Austin recalled. "There were raised fists as well as laughs. And a lot of pot smoking." Along with the cheeb-huffing, free love-having status quo, the Firesign Theatre attracted more than their share of attention-seeking radicals who constantly berated them with demands for lower ticket prices and higher donations to their *cause du jour*. Tired of being associated with these morally superior, hygienically inferior malcontents, the Firesign Theatre shifted the focus of their work inward. "This made us more esoteric," Austin said, "it made us better." Indeed, the Firesign's two records from this period are easily their best.

The Firesign Theatre didn't find their niche, they created it, both *Electrician*, and *How Can You Be* won rave reviews from critics, and anyone who thought they were hip could (and did) recite long passages from their albums, often to the annoyance of others. "People who hate the Firesign Theatre," explained Phil Austin, "are people who were constantly subjected to rooms full of serious-minded people telling them to shut up and listen to this record."

People laughed, but they also studied, searching for meanings both hidden and nonexistent. Papers have been written, even whole courses have been taught on their work, and while it's true that there's a great deal of serious thought on Firesign's albums, most of these stuffed-shirt analyses reek of pretension (it's just comedy, fer cripes' sake). "There was way too much religiosity placed on us," recalled St. Austin. "People elevated us to godlike positions. They read too much into us, and not enough into it." In many

ways, "If you push something hard enough, it will fall over."), and comes face-to-face with a computerized image of the President, which Clem uses to infiltrate the central computer system that controls the entire Fair. He sabotages the computer's memory banks and eventually destroys it, blowing up the entire Fair in the process.

Unlike *How Can You Be* and *Dwarf*, *Bozos* has one story with only one set of characters. Because of its linear plot, *Bozos* lacks the schizophrenic feel of their previous albums, but it grapples successfully with subjects as complex as Science, Technology, and Clowns.

More than any other Firesign record, *Bozos* has been pointed to as an example of the visionary nature of Firesign's work, but even Phil Proctor pooh-pooed such high-minded interpretations: "When you look at things from the point of view that 'the emperor has no clothes,' you reveal basic truths that eventually seem prophetic. Of course, they're not, you're just looking clearly at the inevitability of certain events." Perhaps the most interesting thing about *Bozos*, from a historical standpoint, is that the voice of the President saying "When you clock the Human Race with the stopwatch of History, it's a new record every time" is sampled on rapper Chill Rob G's song "The Power"—truly the highest form of flattery in the '90s.

Bozos is the last of the Firesign Theatre's essential albums. As the fortune teller says—"It's all downhill from here."

DEAR FRIENDS (1972)

For serious fanatics only. A two record set, *Dear Friends* is a collection of edited bits from the Firesign's radio show of the same name. While an interesting insight into the improvisational beginnings of much of the Firesign's material, and not without several very funny bits, including "Sodom and Jubilee," in which two idiots discuss the stupidity of their respective nations ("I'm the stupidest guy in my country." "Well maybe I should move there, then you wouldn't be the stupidest guy anymore.") and "Bob's Brazerko Lounge," *Dear Friends* bears almost no resemblance to Firesign's other albums.

NOT INSANE (1972)

Two word review: shit sandwich.

THE TALE OF THE GIANT RAT OF SUMATRA (1974)

Firesign Theatre followed the *Not Insane* fiasco with *Giant Rat*, an album with all the clever wordplay and silly voices of their previous platters, but none of the depth. Firesign made no bones about the debt they owe to *The Goon Show* (a British radio comedy that featured Peter Sellers and Spike Milligan), and *Giant Rat* is their homage to it, a by-the-numbers parody of Sherlock Holmes (Hemlock



Stones, the Great Defective). Interestingly, its cocaine references predate the renewed popularity of Sig Freud's favorite pick-me-up by about 5 years. *Giant Rat* is Firesign's most blatantly sexual album, and while some would call its ribald humor a cop-out, it is this reviewer's humble opinion that their frequent lapses into reproductive revelry are to be commended, not criticized. If *Giant Rat* is Firesign's most gratuitously vulgar album ("There's a high-heeled foreign lady and her heathen servant waiting on the footpad below," "Show her up," "I'd be glad to—Mr. Stones will see you now, *you cheap whore!*"), it's still better than anything you'll ever hear from such pedestrian filth-mongers as Richard Pryor or George Gobel.



EVERYTHING YOU KNOW IS WRONG (1974)

After three years of disappointing Firesign albums and a handful of noteworthy, but far-from-essential solo albums, Firesign regrouped and decided to "do it one more time for the kids." The result was *Everything You Know Is Wrong*, on which Firesign made fun of "Nude Age" stupidity years before it enjoyed one of its many insipid revivals. Dr. "Happy" Harry Cox, paranormal researcher and naturalist trailer park dweller, reveals shocking truths like "the Aztecs invented the vacation," "our forefathers took drugs," and "men and women are the same sex." He shows proof of visitors from beyond who look like humans and act like humans, but don't seem to know what milk is. On the travelogue *The*

Golden Hind, Cox's neighbors, Buzzy and Bunny Crumbhunger, cheerfully show home movies in which they are captured, raped, murdered, and "alienated" by aliens ("See, here I'm trying to give them some milk, but they don't seem to know what it is." "But they sure know where it comes from!") After Nino the Mindboggler "thinks to you" about holes, the story follows Harry to the sight of Rebus Caneebus' daredevil jump into the hole in the middle of the desert.

Everything You Know Is Wrong is full of classic Firesign bits like the Bear Whiz Beer commercial, and plenty of Fieldsian names like Beauregard Cowhard and Art Wholeflaffer (along with all the other Americans of Humorous Descent). At the time it seemed like comedy's answer to Uri Geller were once again riding the crystal ship of success, but as Harry Cox said "We've reached the end. Or is it only the beginn . . . No, it's the end."

IN THE NEXT WORLD YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN (1975)

The last of the Firesign Theatre's albums for Columbia is the supposed sequel to *Everything You Know Is Wrong*. Made up largely of material that was left off *EYKIW*, *Next World* shares only the mythical setting of Heater/Hellmouth, California in common with its far superior predecessor. Although they employed many of the techniques of their earlier albums, it seemed that they had gone to the proverbial well once too often. The album begins as a satire of TV cop shows, switches to a commercial for Dead Cat Soap ("There's a whole dead cat in every bar."), then to an over-long parody of a boring soap opera (the extreme length of which was perhaps intended to drive home the point of how mundane these shows are; if so it succeeds a little too well), then to a depression-relief telethon, then back to the cop show, then to a game show called "Give It Back" in which the grand prize winner has to commit a wild terrorist act, the idea of which, like many of the ideas on this album, is funnier in concept than in execution. *EYKIW* has a few good moments ("He looks like a 57 year old potato in a trick suit" and "We've got to read him his rights, but he hasn't got any!"), but they are few and far between.

An important aspect of parody is that its mocking tone usually harbors a certain amount of affectionate tribute: when the Firesign Theatre made fun of hippies and Bozos and New Age weirdos it was because they found them curiously fascinating. Unfortunately, the subjects Firesign spoof on *Next World* are about as interesting as "buttmeat."

Perhaps they had played out their style, or perhaps they had just overstayed their welcome. Whatever the reason, *Next World*, as the last of the Firesign's albums to be released during their most vital period, is about as funny as a bag of hammers. ■

ways this was a symptom of the times—Charlie Manson wasn't the only one holding *The White Album* in one hand and Gideon's Bible in the other. "Everything was horrifyingly exaggerated in those days," Austin said. "There was nothing mysterious about us; we were simply artists working in a field where artists weren't used to working. We were basically four guys who wanted to make you laugh."

In 1972, they began work on what was intended to be their most ambitious album to date, *Not Insane*, which turned out to be the biggest disaster of their career. According to Ossman, *Not Insane*, originally conceived as a science fiction record, was supposed to "personify satellite communication. As if programs themselves and their creators were orbiting around the earth, looking down at the Earth as they did their shows in a kind of weightless condition." Unfortunately, very early in the recording of this album the group went through what would be the first of many breakups. "We didn't set out to be successful," said Phil Proctor, "but when we did, our egos emerged." Writing sessions turned into grudge matches; creative differences turned to personal attacks. "Things were getting pretty ugly," Proctor said. "One day I told David I thought one of his jokes sucked, and the next day there was a potato in my exhaust pipe."

In addition to this, David Ossman and his wife Tiny moved out of LA to escape the smog, and Phil Austin broke up with his wife Analee, who proceeded to take off with Peter Bergman. This left Austin and Proctor with the unenviable task of convincing Columbia not to worry, the record would be finished. The two Phils proceeded to work on *Not Insane* by themselves, doing what Ossman called "a rather perfunctory job." The four managed to regroup in time to put the finishing touches on the record, but by then the damage had been done. Critics complained that the album lacked direction, it was impossible to follow, it didn't have the insight of the previous albums, and most importantly, it wasn't funny.

Amidst the dissatisfaction with this record, and owing to the fact that each of the four was going through some sort of personal crisis, they began to look for creative outlets outside the Firesign Theatre. In 1973 Proctor and Bergman began to write and record as a separate entity, releasing their first record, *TV or Not TV*, which Phil Proctor correctly—if immodestly—refers to as "a forgotten classic." Austin and Ossman also released solo albums that year; *Roller Maidens From Outer Space* and *How Time Flies*, respectively.

When they eventually got back together they recorded their sixth album, *The Tale of the Giant Rat of Sumatra*. Recycled from material performed on Radio Free Oz, *Giant Rat* presented itself as an easy project—it required little writing, and it could be done relatively quickly. *Giant Rat* features some of the Firesign's most rapid-fire repartee (it deals with Sherlock Holmes' fondness for cocaine), and it has yuks aplenty: "I deduce that we're about to be entertained by an American ingenue from up-

state New York." "How the deuce did you deduce that?" "The taps on her shoes. They resound to a frequency produced by a unique alloy of aluminium and magna-seam, manufactured in Chicago, but shuffled off to Buffalo."

In 1974, Firesign began working on *Everything You Know Is Wrong*, which tried to do for the '70s what *Electrician* did for the '60s, but it was clear that the movement that fuelled their creative energy had come to an end. "We were part of the Vietnam era," Bergman recalled, "We were writing during a holocaust. When the holocaust ended, we stopped doing our best work."

That same year, Firesign released a film version of *Everything You Know Is Wrong*, in which they acted out the entire album, using the record itself as the soundtrack. The result was interesting, if not wholly successful. Like their earlier attempt at film, *Martian Space Party* (released in 1972), *Everything You Know Is Wrong* showed the difficulty Firesign had working in a visual medium. But unlike the disappointment one feels upon seeing some director's interpretation of a character from a favorite book, the disappointment one feels viewing Firesign's films is seeing how the group actually looks.

Despite the lukewarm reaction the film received, and despite continually mixed reviews (such as Lester Bangs' "Not Insane and Not Funny Either"), the Firesign Theatre were more high-profile than ever. They had developed a full-scale touring show that featured material from all the previous albums and played to packed houses, and though it appeared to many that Firesign were finally back on track, their troubles were far from over.

More breakups and reunions followed. Proctor and Bergman were becoming a successful comedy team, releasing more albums and touring extensively, billing themselves as "Proctor and Bergman: half the wits of the Firesign Theatre." Proctor and Bergman's considerable success was met with more than a little resentment from foundering Firesigns Austin and Ossman, who felt that Proctor and Bergman's energies would be better spent on the group. "They're Judas," Austin told *Rolling Stone*. "Half the shit they're doing isn't even funny, and the other half they stole from me! I'd rather listen to Proctor & Gamble." In 1975, with Proctor and Bergman on the road, Austin and Ossman wrote what was to be the last of Firesign's records for Columbia, *In the Next World You're On Your Own*. Although Proctor and Bergman returned in time to record the album, and despite the fact that they contributed heavily to in-studio rewrites, it was clear that *Next World* was not a true Firesign Theatre album. Shortly after its release, Columbia dropped their contract.

With the end of the Columbia era, the Firesign Theatre's time seemed finally to have come and gone. They continued to be as prolific as ever, working both together and apart, but the proverbial honeymoon was over. In 1977 they released

Just Folks: A Firesign Chat on the incredibly obscure Butterfly label, the legitimacy of which was highly suspect. "I don't want to accuse anybody of anything," Ossman confided, "but we felt that they were laundering money, and since they had chosen to launder some of it our way, we really didn't care." Due to the limited distribution of the label, only three copies of *Just Folks* were sold.

In 1979, Rhino Records offered Firesign a contract. Unfortunately, Rhino wasn't able to offer them enough money to produce good new material. "We're more than happy to sing for our supper," Austin reportedly told one Rhino executive, "but if you want us to make people laugh, it's really going to cost you." Their first record for Rhino, *Nick Danger in the Case of the Missing Shoe*, had been written and recorded a



The KISS-like spectacle of Firesign live.

few years previous as a pilot for a radio serial. Their next album, *Fighting Clowns*, was a recording of a live performance from Firesign's 1980 world tour. On *Fighting Clowns*, Firesign attempted to apply their attitudes and ideas to the Reagan era, with mixed results. Somehow their style of humor didn't seem to work in an '80s context. Whereas their earlier work was penetrating and self-effacing, their newer material seemed stilted and reactionary. They were unable to attract many new fans, and their old fans couldn't help but compare the newer material to their earlier, funnier albums.

In 1982, having received a commission from an organization called Earplay, Firesign released their second Shakespeare parody (the first having comprised the never-listened-to second side of *Not Insane*) called *Shakespeare's Lost Comedy*, which is just about as hilarious as you'd expect a Shakespeare parody to be.

Meanwhile, David and Tiny Ossman had divorced, and David went to Washington to pursue a career with NPR, a move he thought would drive the final nail into Firesign's coffin. Much to his chagrin, however, Austin, Bergman, and Proctor continued to record as the Firesign Theatre, releasing three unspectacular albums: *Lawyer's Hospital* in 1982, *Nick Danger in the Three Faces of Al* in 1984, and finally *Eat or Be Eaten* in 1985. Ossman was rightfully nonplussed by the group's use of the Firesign The-

atre name. "I felt they should have called it Crosby, Stills, and Nash—anything other than the Firesign Theatre, which then and now I maintain was the four of us." Like the Doors without Morrison, like Martin without Lewis, like Leopold without Loeb, the Firesign Theatre was just not the Firesign Theatre anymore, and in 1986 they finally gave up the ghost.

The inevitable demise of the Firesign Theatre did not halt interest in their work. *Four Alarm Firesignal*, one of many fanclub newsletters, continued publication until 1989, keeping fanatics up to date on the members' current projects, as well as printing letters, articles and interviews pertaining mostly to the group's early albums. Documentary film-maker Ron Mann (best known for his 1989 film *Comic Book Confidential*) is currently working on a film about radio, *Sparks*, which will include a segment on the Firesign Theatre. (*Sparks* was originally to be an entire feature length film about Firesign called *Who Am US Anyway?*) Most importantly, Firesign's first four albums have all been reissued on CD by Mobile Fidelity Sound Labs.

As for the four or five crazy guys themselves, they're all still active in comedy in one way or another, although many of their current projects have little in common with the Firesign Theatre. Phil Austin is currently working on the screenplay for *The Dead Sell Out*, the oft-threatened 17-hour-long Grateful Dead movie. David Ossman, after being dismissed from NPR for airing a too-pretentious-even-for-public-radio documentary on John Cage, teaches radio production and writing, and continues to do dramatic radio pieces. Phil Proctor and Peter Bergman (who to this day vehemently deny that they had anything to do with the Starland Vocal Band TV show) recently created the Proctor and Bergman Comedy Service, which provides radio stations with short "bits" to use as lead-ins on wacky morning drive-time shows, and are also working on a pilot series for the Arts & Entertainment cable network (commonly referred to as the Hitler Channel). In addition, Proctor has continued to make occasional appearances on network TV shows, the likes of which once were the subject of the Firesign Theatre's harshest satire: *The Golden Girls*, *Night Court*, and even *Webster*.

'60s "radicals" ending up as part of the very establishment they once protested is a fairly typical phenomenon; the members of the Firesign Theatre writing lame screenplays or yucking it up with Bea Arthur isn't any more ironic than John Cleese plugging computer hardware, or Commander Cody performing at the White House. Of course, that's not much of an excuse, but at least the former Firesigns aren't merely resting on their laurels, as are most casualties of their generation. Besides, the best thing about the Firesign Theatre was that they never took anything seriously, least of all themselves. They put it best at the end of *I Think We're All Bozos On This Bus*: "I can't say that I understood everything, but it sure was interesting and well worth a dollar." ■

IN DAYS OF OLD
THEM NIGHTS WAS COLD
UPON THE SHORE OF SHIT...

THERE BIRTHED A WAIL
TO CURDLE BLOOD, THE
DEVIL'S SPAWN WAS IT!

ONE PART IG AND ONE
PART GEORGE, SOME
SONIC SMITH THROWN IN,
THE VOO DOO DOLL BE
BORN ONE NIGHT WITHIN
A FIELD OF TIN...

A THROBBING PULSE
OF MOTOR GRIND, HIS
BUTTON EYE AGLOW, WHAT
THE MAMAS DONE FORGOT THE
GURLIES WAS SOON TO KNOW!

HE STOMPED THE COMP
FROM COAST TO COAST
LEAVIN A BLOODY TRAIL.
NO OTHER BAND COULD
EVER HOPE TO CATCH,
DIS LIC' WILDCATS TAIL!

WITH HYPNO-MIKE
ELECTRO-GLORY AND
BACKUP BAND OF ZOMBIES...

THE VOO DOO DOLL WUZ ALL,
"THE ONE!" THEM ART FAGS
RAN TO MOMMY...

BUT THE IRON PIMP
LAID DOWN DA WOID
"HE WANTIDDA GIDDA SLICE!"

"DIS VOO DOO DAWL
AINT PAYIN' FRIEGHT,
YO KNOW DAT IZNT NICE!"

GOON ISLAND WAS EMPTIED OUT AND SHIPPED INTO THA LOOP. MOTOR CITY MAYHEM WAS OUT THA CAGE RAGIN ON THE LOOSE!

10,000 STRONG WIF BATS & RAKES, TIRE IRONS, CHAINS & PIPES, DEM GOONS GON' KICK SOME ASS TONIGHT. ANY FOOL WOULD THINK TWICE!

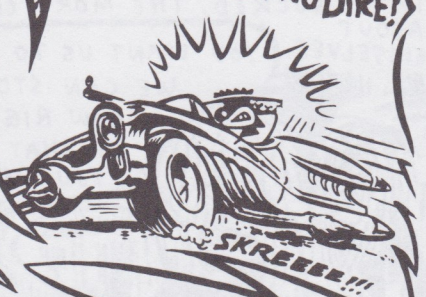
DA VOO DOO DOLL STOOD ALL ALONE, (JUST BACKUP TAPES, YA KNOW,) BWAH, HE SHOWED SOME CLASS AWRITE, HE WAS READY TO GO!



WITH A MIGHTY BELCH OF PABST BLUE RIBBON HE BLEW THEM GOONS AN HOUR. PRETTIEST SIGHT YOU'D EVER SEE, THEY OPENED LIKE A FLOWER.

THE SHEET GLASS SHATTERED FAR & WIDE, STEEL GIRDERS RIP A TWIST, MANGLED MOB-O-GARbled GOON GUTS SHITTIN' AND A-PISSED!

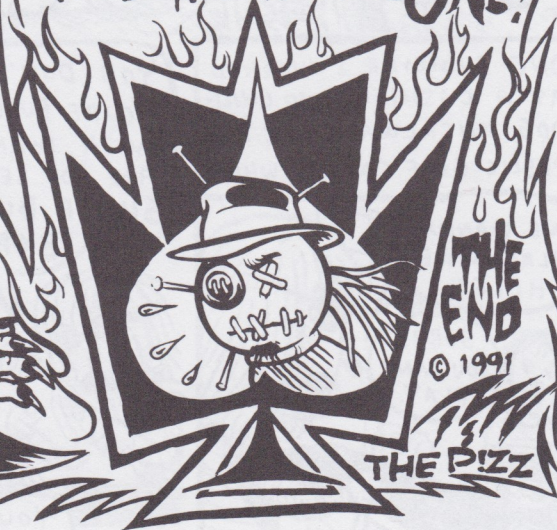
THE IRON PIMP DONE SCREECHED A HALT IN HIS CHARIOT OF FIRE POPPED DE TRUNK FOR HIS SECRET WEAPON THANGS BE LOOKING DIRE!



'BLASTER OF NUKE, YO LIL' PUKE!' MASTER MACK LET HER RIP, BUT DEF SHIT WUZ NOT HOID DAT NITE, DA PIMP COULDN'T GIDDA GRIP!

PACK DAT FRO AN BLOWN BLOW VOO DOOS DA DEVILS SON!!

THE ACE OF SPADES FOREVERMORE HE BE KNOWN AS THE ONE!



THE END © 1991

THE PIZZ

DETROIT IS FOR Voyeurs!

A THINK
PIECE BY
LLOYD
DANGLE

IT NEVER FAILS. I'LL BEAT
A LAME-O PARTY WHEN
SOMEBODY STARTS FISHING
AROUND FOR SOMETHING TO SAY.

WHERE'RE YOU
FROM, ORIGINALLY?

DETROIT.



NO SHIT—DETROIT? THAT'S SO
FUCKIN' INTENSE, MAN! MURDER
CITY! HOME OF THE STOOGES!
OH MAN, THAT'S INTENSE, I CAN'T
BELIEVE YOU'RE TALKING TO ME,
I'M SUCH A PUSSY TO BE FROM
SAN ANSELMO!

WHOA,
RELAX!



PEOPLE LOVE DETROIT!
THEY MIGHT NOT
EVEN KNOW THAT
MICHIGAN IS SHAPED
LIKE A MITTEN, BUT
THEY'VE HEARD OF
"DEVIL'S NIGHT," SEEN
POLICE CARS BURNING
AT THE WORLD SERIES,
AND KNOW HOW
FRIDA KAHLO MUST
HAVE SUFFERED AT
HENRY FORD HOSPITAL!

ALL I REMEMBER IS—FOR A PLACE WITH THE FRIENDLIEST
MCDONALD'S COUNTER GIRLS—MICHIGAN PRODUCED
THE RUDEST, MOST PUGNACIOUS BANDS! THE MORE
THEY SUCKED, THE MORE COCKSURE THEY WERE
ABOUT
THEMSELVES.

YOU WANT US TO STOP THE SHOW?!
WE CAN STOP THE FUCKING
SHOW RIGHT NOW, ASSHOLES!
IS THAT WHAT
YOU WANT?

I DIDN'T
THINK SO.



COME TO THINK OF IT, WHAT DO ALL
THE BIG STARS WHO CAME OUT OF
DETROIT HAVE IN COMMON?

WHAT THEY LACK IN APTITUDE—



THEY MAKE
UP FOR IN ATTITUDE!

ONE SUMMER I WORKED
AS A CASHIER AND CHILI-
DOG MICROWAVER AT A
PUBLIC GOLF COURSE, WHEN:

WE WANNA
PLAY NINE
HOLES.

SORRY,
YOU CAN'T
PLAY.



YOU DON'T KNOW WHO
YOU'RE FUCKING
WITH, MAN! WE
ARE BOB SEGER'S
SILVER BULLET
BAND!

HERE'S A PAYCHECK
WITH BOB'S SIGNATURE
IF YOU DON'T
BELIEVE US!

YOU BETTER LET US
PLAY OR YOU'LL BE
SORRY, KID!



I BELIEVE YOU, BUT I
STILL CAN'T LET YOU
PLAY GOLF IN THOSE
SHOES!



I ADMIT IT IS SOMETIMES TEMPTING TO USE DETROIT'S MYSTIQUE TO MY ADVANTAGE.

HEY, I'M FROM DETROIT.



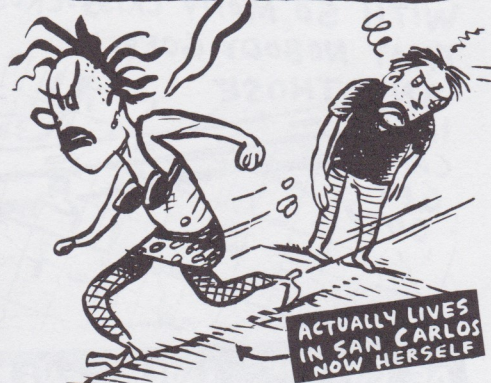
YEAH? WHAT STREET?

UH... WELL... IT WASN'T EXACTLY INSIDE DETROIT CITY LIMITS... I I... I WAS FROM ANN ARBOR...

CHOMP CHOMP

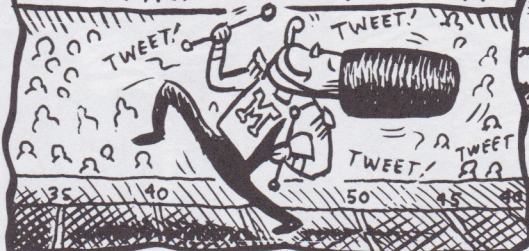


ANN ARBOR? THAT'S NOT DETROIT, PAL!

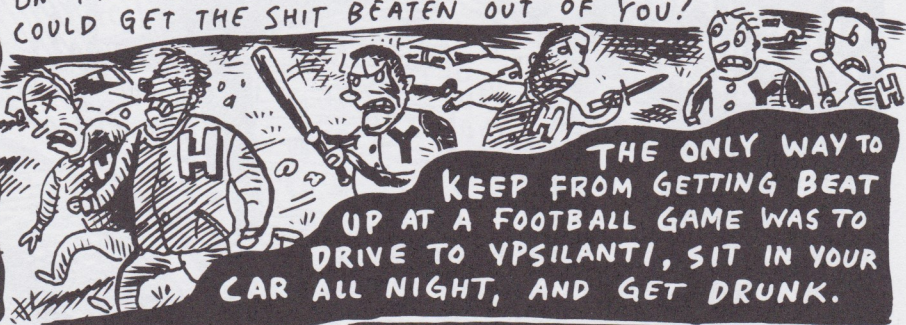


ACTUALLY LIVES IN SAN CARLOS NOW HERSELF

OH NO! MY BIGGEST SECRET IS REVEALED! I'M REALLY FROM ANN ARBOR! THIRTY MILES AND HALF A WORLD AWAY!

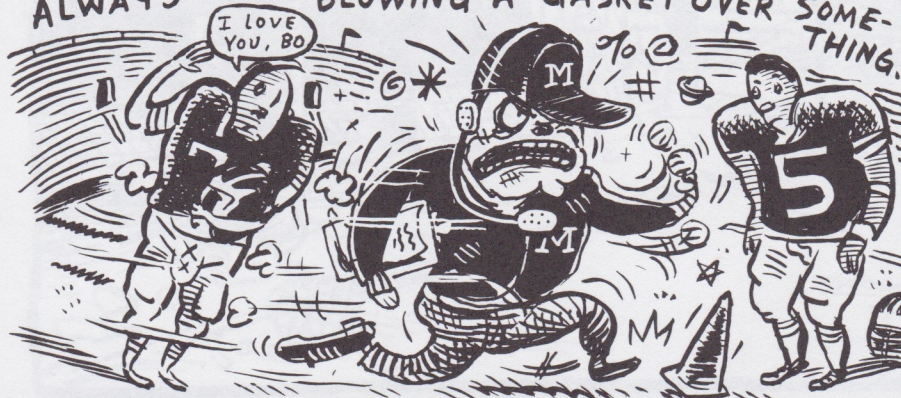


FOOTBALL WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN OUR LIVES. ON FRIDAY NIGHT, A HIGH SCHOOL LETTER JACKET COULD GET THE SHIT BEATEN OUT OF YOU!

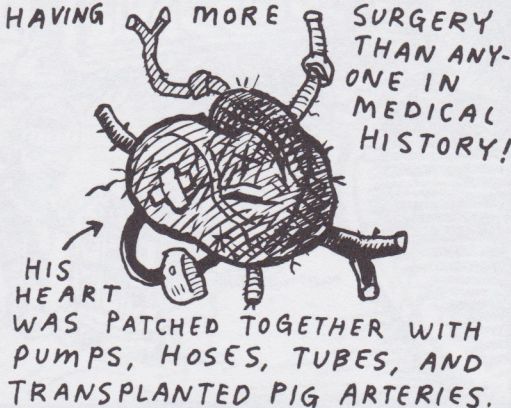


THE ONLY WAY TO KEEP FROM GETTING BEAT UP AT A FOOTBALL GAME WAS TO DRIVE TO YPSILANTI, SIT IN YOUR CAR ALL NIGHT, AND GET DRUNK.

OUR BEST ROLE MODEL WAS BO SCHEMBECHLER, THE BIG ASSHOLE FOOTBALL COACH WHO WAS ALWAYS BLOWING A GASKET OVER SOMETHING.



COACH BO PAYED FOR HIS FOUL TEMPER AND FATTY DIET BY HAVING A MORE SURGERY THAN ANYONE IN MEDICAL HISTORY!



HIS HEART WAS PATCHED TOGETHER WITH PUMPS, HOSES, TUBES, AND TRANSPLANTED PIG ARTERIES.

THOUGH ANN ARBOR WAS RED-BLOODED & ALL-AMERICAN, EVERY TIME I WENT THREE MILES IN ANY DIRECTION I WAS INSTANTLY IDENTIFIED BY THE REDNECK REPUBLICANS!



WHERE YA' FROM? ANN ARBOR.

I COULD TELL BY YOUR HAIRCUT, FAGGOT.

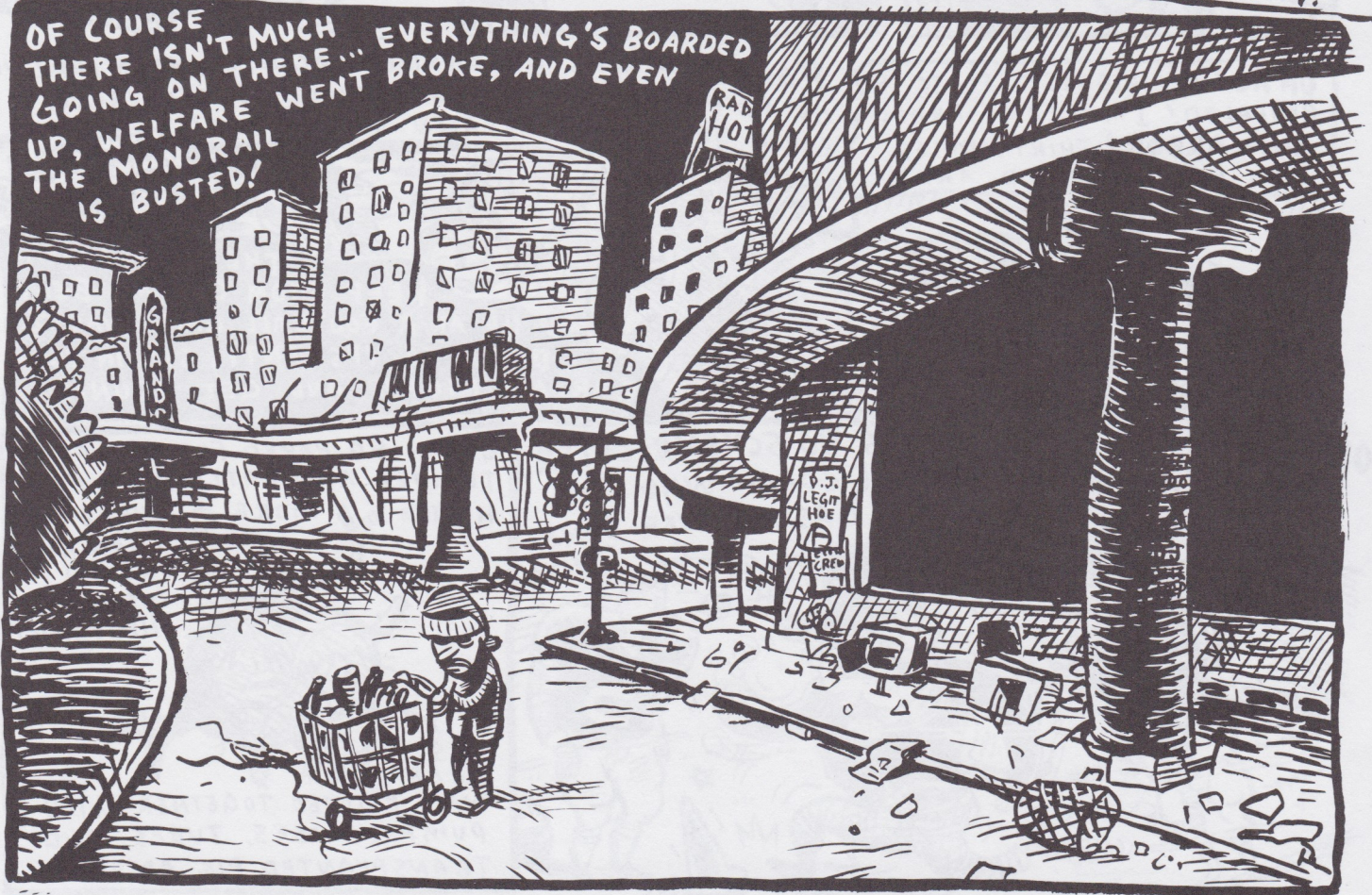
YOU WAIT HERE, I'M GOING IN THERE TO TAKE A SHIT. WHEN I COME OUT I'M GOING TO KICK YOUR ASS.



OKAY, SO IT'S NO DETROIT, BUT DETROIT'S NOT EVEN DETROIT THESE DAYS! THEY BUILT HIGHWAYS SO ELABORATE, WITH SO MANY CRISS-CROSSES, THAT NOBODY GOES IN, AND THOSE INSIDE CAN'T GET OUT!



OF COURSE THERE ISN'T MUCH GOING ON THERE... EVERYTHING'S BOARDED UP, WELFARE WENT BROKE, AND EVEN THE MONORAIL IS BUSTED!



...BUT NO MATTER HOW BAD THE ECONOMY GETS, THE PUFF PAVERS AND MALL MAKERS CONTINUE THEIR INEXORABLE PROGRESS ACROSS THE LANDSCAPE.



YEARS AFTER I HAD MOVED AWAY, I WAS INVITED TO HELP PRESS FLESH AT A FUND-RAISER FOR THE "MICHIGAN VOICE" IN NEW YORK CITY! I WAS GOING FOR SOME FREE FOOD WHEN A CONSCIENTIOUS ROCK BAND CAME UP AND STARTED THIS SHIT:



IF YOU CARE SO MUCH ABOUT MICHIGAN'S PROBLEMS, WHY DIDN'T YOU STAY THERE AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT?

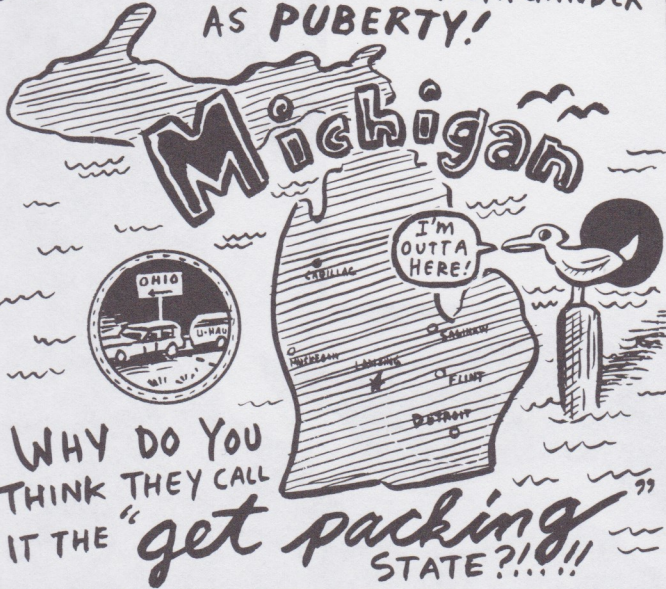


... INSTEAD OF DITCHING THE SINKING SHIP JUST TO SAVE YOUR OWN ASS?!

YEAH, MAN, YOU REALLY SOLD OUT.



WHAT IDIOTIC, SELF-RIGHTEOUS BLATHER!! MOVING AWAY IS AS INEVITABLE A STAGE IN THE LIFE OF A YOUNG MICHIGANDER AS PUBERTY!



MY FEW FRIENDS WHO REMAIN ARE SOUL-LESS GHOSTS, WORKING FOR TOM MONAGHAN AND MUTTERING LONG AGONIZING APOLOGIES!



FUCK THAT SHIT! I WANTED TO BE LIKE DETROIT'S MOST FAMOUS CARTOONIST, CATHY GUISEWITE!

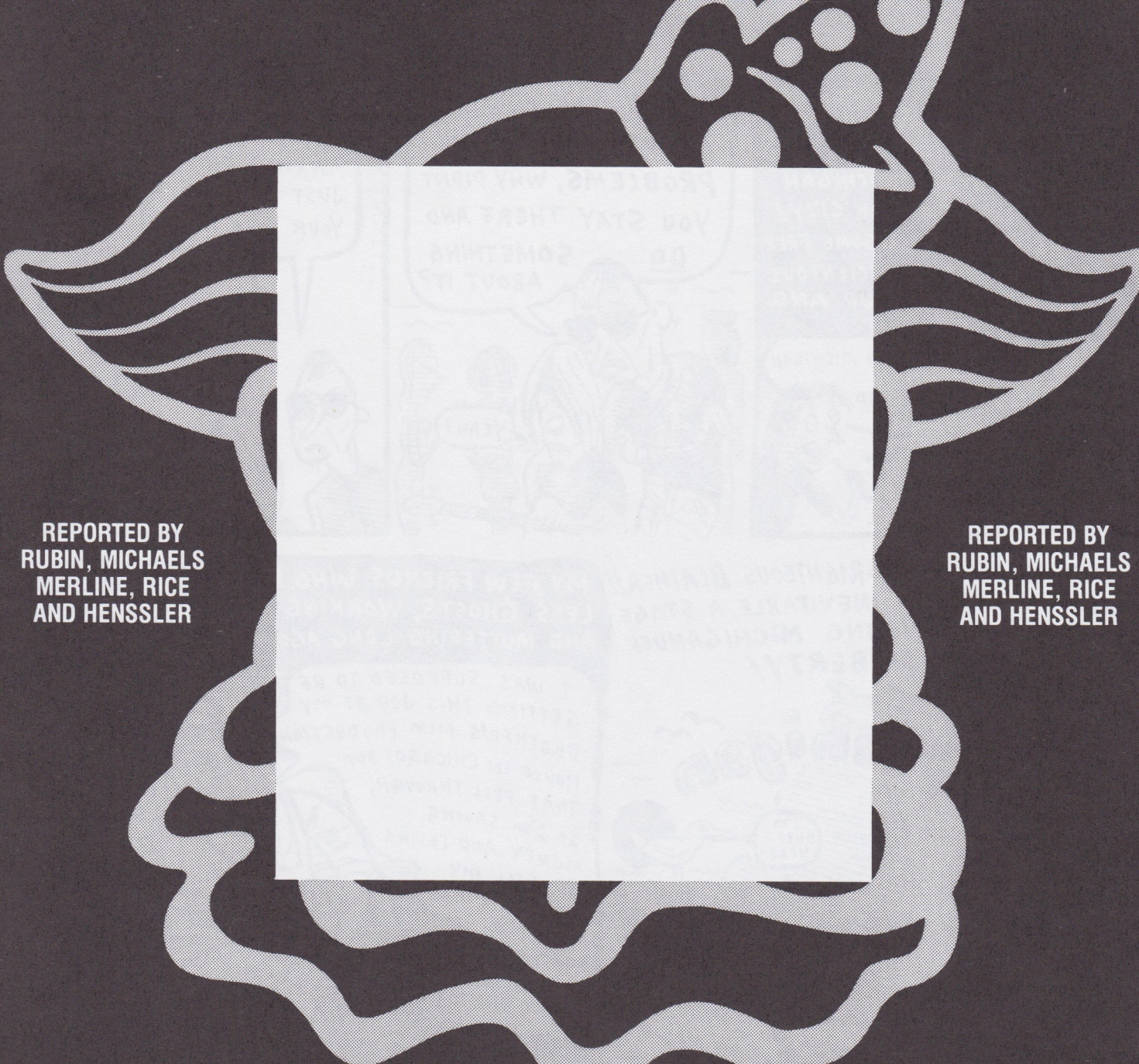
I LIVE IN L.A. AND MAKE MILLIONS—AND I DONT EVEN HAVE A NOSE!!



SO NEXT TIME YOU RENT ROBOCOP AND START THINKING ABOUT MOTOWN, JUST REMEMBER, THEY DONT MAKE RECORDS THERE ANYMORE—OR CARS! ALL THEY MAKE IS FANTASY FOR VOYEURS LIKE YOU!

LET'S BE SURE TO KEEP THIS GUY OFF OUR GUEST LIST!

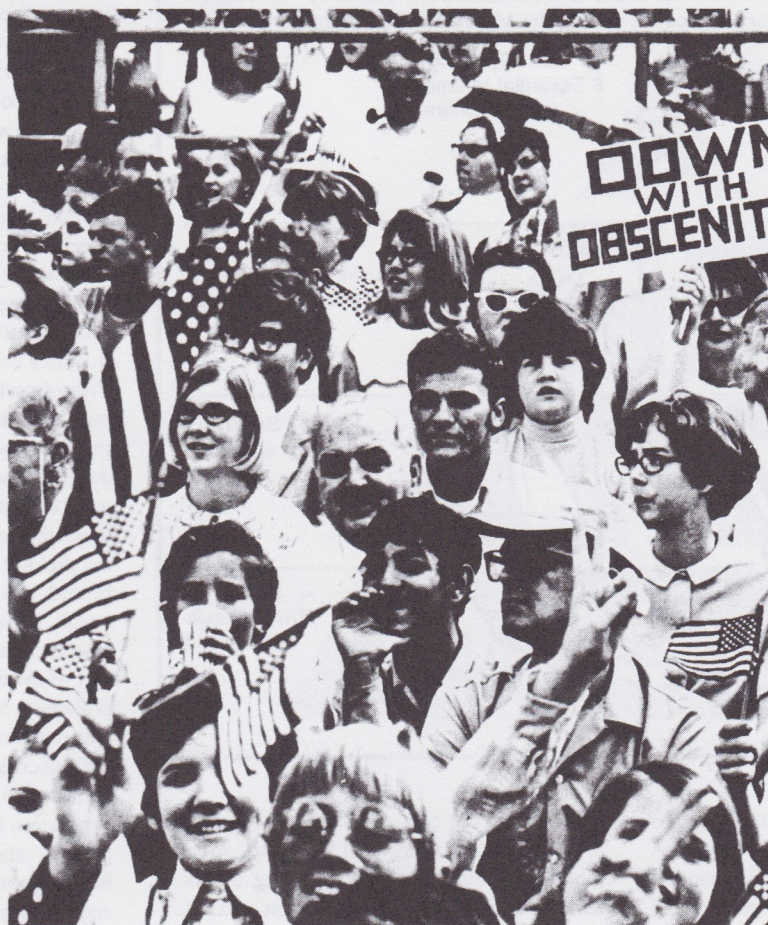




REPORTED BY
RUBIN, MICHAELS
MERLINE, RICE
AND HENSSLER

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THE MOTORBOOTY GENERATION



They have attitude problems like you wouldn't believe. They would rather sell your cherished Misfits "Cough/Cool" 45 for rent money than waste their shining potential xeroxing frat keg party flyers in a college-town copy shop. They wish they had all the money in the world, but they never do anything to get it other than wait for their parents to die. They're convinced they don't want to follow a traditional career path, but still are bitter that the economy won't even allow them that option. They snicker at Mexican throw rugs worn as shirts, chunky horn-rimmed nerd chic, and "college rock." They distrust anybody with facial hair. They hate punkers. They're easily bored, and the quest for laughs, along with sex and food, has become one of their basic animal drives. Taking a cue from Don Rickles—their equivalent of Will Rogers—they're equal-opportunity smart alecks who make fun of everybody. They crave entertainment, but prefer spending a quiet evening at home pizza- (or escort-) pranking enemies to dropping money on the latest Oliver Stone teach-in. Their idea of community service is to slap on a side of Funkade-

lic at a party. They're tired of drugs but wish there were more of them to try (and at cheaper prices). They hate the wildly generalizing catchphrases that certain "scribes" have coined to describe them and their peers, but they can't come up with any term of their own that can accurately size up more than five of their friends.

Meet the MOTORBOOTY generation, those several bold thousands (at least 1,620, anyway*) of young Americans born too late to change the world and too soon to just throw it away. (Since the task of uncovering this peer group fell to us here at MOTORBOOTY, we, like the scientists who lent their good names to the Islets of Langerhans or the Rectal Columns of Morgani, get to christen it.) Although the media have assigned them various personality crises and tagged them with numerous too-tidy buzzwords—"twenty-something," "baby busters," "slackers," "posties," "Generation X," "Thirteeners," "Clubrats," "Bladdermoses," and "the Bozo Underground," to name but a few—the MOTORBOOTY generation is neither "lost" nor "foundering," just "temporarily misplaced."

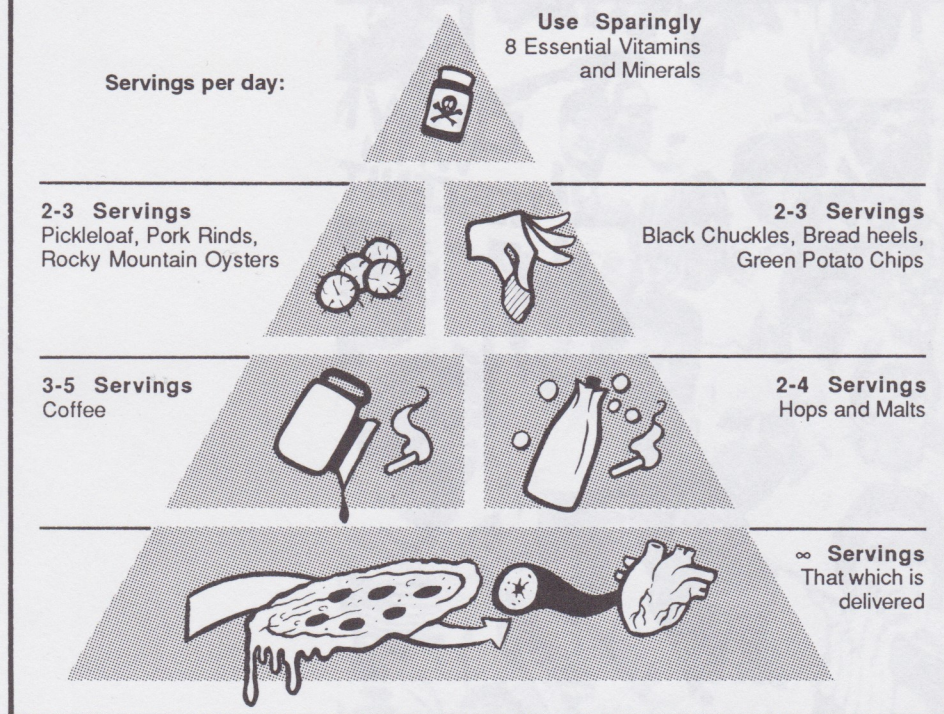
Born whiners, members of the MOTORBOOTY multitude—who see themselves less as the "in crowd" than as the "un-crowd"—are alienated not only from the average schmo, from previous failed youth movements, and from other current subculture groups, but from themselves. They resent being classified or criticized by outsiders, and they hate being called "the MOTORBOOTY generation" even worse, refusing to answer to the cute little names (like "Bootniks" or "Booties" or "Bootsters") that we were going to make up. They'd prefer to be left alone, but if somebody insists on talking about them, they'd like to be addressed as "They Who Shall Not Be Named."

The Generation M have inherited an era defined strictly by prefixed and suffixed modifications of existing terms (the post-quasi-mod this or the anti-neo-something that), the measly leftovers from the maxed-out modernist age. Socially, politically, sexually, and artistically, all extremes have been reached and all taboos broken. For example, no matter what music the new breed hopes to belch forth, it can't be as hard as

*The minimum number of people necessary to form a phalanx, or recognizable social movement, according to half-mad French sociologist and reformer Charles Fourier (1772-1837), who said, "Show me 1,620 breech wetters and I will show you the breech wetting nation."

THE MOTORBOOTY GENERATION FOOD PYRAMID

In response to the latest misguided gibberish from the Food and Drug Administration, MOTORBOOTY's in-house nutritionists have concocted the Food Guide Pyramid as their primary device for setting the MOTORBOOTY training table



the Stooges, as crazed as Captain Beefheart, as funky as James Brown, as raunchy as Albert Ayler, or as offensive as Jimmy Buffett. To insist on making quixotic efforts at "pushing the envelope," like G.G. Allin, the Dwarves, or Lydia Lunch, is to end up looking like a two-bit frank, even though the *noir*-clad cognoscenti might take you for Magellan. In other words, the cultural wad has been shot.

The ones who want to take the credit for shooting it are those of the so-called "baby boomer" generation, the roughly 72 million yahoos sired in the blue-balled frenzy of G.I.s returning from the Big One. Because of their numbers, the boomers like to think that they invented the wheel (as if no one ever had long hair before), but due to a combination of amateur pharmacology, poor hygiene, "Have A Nice Day," and the Grateful Dead, their moment came and went, never reaching the climax at which it hinted. They set out to change the world (or at least go topless), but ended up only filling the shoes that their Cleaveresque parents had cobbled for them. Unable to manifest their revolution as anything more than two songs by the Beatles, the boomers have now inherited the throne they once tried to topple. With control of the media and the marketplace, they now bitterly penalize all those who have come after with relentless and silly comparisons to themselves.

The media is narcissistically infatuated with the '60s as the model for just about everything, constantly comparing today's happenings to items from yesterday's scrapbook: the Gulf War as Vietnam, Lollapalooza as Woodstock, Guns

n' Roses as the Stones, Seattle as Liverpool, *MTV Spring Break* as Kent State, etc., with the modern counterpart always coming up short. Likewise, to the "Don't trust anyone under thirtysomething" set, today's youth just aren't "young" enough. The tiresome nature of these analogies is painfully apparent to those on the MOTORBOOTY tip. "Fuck the baby boomers," says Hal Czalikakic, age 25-30, "I'm more into baby bloomers." "They have a great future behind them," concurs license plate stamper Dylan Cohl, "but constantly hearing about the importance of every poop they've ever taken is like being in prison."

Whether they're major ex-cons or econ majors, those of the MOTORBOOTY cartel have been called "lame" so often that it's just another punchline to them. Dwelling as they do in the Irony Age (which followed the Stoned and Bronzed Ages, naturally), they take nothing at face value: if you're building them up or chopping them down, they think you're just pulling their collective leg, and even if they're wrong, it just doesn't matter—they're still laughing. They've taken sarcasm to a higher plane: where slumming hipsters laugh about Elvis kitsch, MOTORBOOTY wiseacres laugh about the slumming hipsters. The phenomenon of sarcasm as the MOTORBOOTY lingua franca is so pervasive that usually even the most fluent don't know if they mean what they're saying. "If you insist on comparing the two, the '90s are the '60s turned upside down," says amateur sociologist Natalie Kladd. "Love is out. Negativity is in. The credo of this generation is, 'If you don't

have anything nice to say, say it often.'"

Because a miss is as good as a mile, any attempt to summarize this generation with a few dozen offhanded pigeonholes would confuse the issue entirely. So here we go.

Television: Feed Your Head

It's impossible to understand the MOTORBOOTY generation without first coming to terms with television's role in their formative years, as wet nurse, goldfish substitute, and boon companion. Who needed careless parents to provide a primal scene, when there was Benny Hill? Even as rugrats, MOTORBOOTY viewers were sophisticated enough to pick out the educational programs that best suited their needs; they knew that they could learn more on the *Streets of San Francisco* than on *Sesame Street*, and that the best way to see the world was to stay inside getting a cathode tan, especially on nice sunny days. The advent of satellite technology broadened their programming horizons even further: while the daunting task of getting up and turning the dial left their immediate ancestors channel-bound, MOTORBOOTY connoisseurs can watch *Scorch*, *Small Wonder*, *Alf*, and *What A Dummy* simultaneously without leaving the comfort of the divan. "Cable TV set me free," says philatelist Maya Sharona. "The remote control was my Emancipation Proclamation."

While critics of the MOTORBOOTY network continue to make tedious accusations that the generation has suffered from prolonged TV exposure—short attention spans, shaky vertical hold, fear of a laugh track-less planet—what such naysayers fail to realize is that like the blind albino anglerfish, which has genetically adapted to meet the demands of life in the fetid, lightless, subterranean caverns it calls home, MOTORBOOTY primates have been naturally selected for a life of perpetual viewing. Though the prime time portrayal of everyday youthful petulance

"fuck the baby boomers!"



"love is out. negativity is in."



has devolved from the superficial but entertaining whining of *An American Family*'s Lance Loud to the superficial but stultifying whining of *The Real World*'s cast of Lance Links, the MOTORBOOTY audience is more than qualified to exercise its inalienable Nielsen rights.

Family: Loved the Show, But . . .

To nobody's surprise, the sons and daughters of the MOTORBOOTY revolution have no desire to be like their parents; what self-respecting young person ever did? But unlike their predecessors, MOTORBOOTY scions have taken their rejection of their folks' values and fashion sense one step further, coming up with the perfect formula for avoiding the same mistakes: use a condom. "I'm never having kids," says Ethel Knightraight, one score and seven years old. "The very thought of dealing with a sugar-addled tyrant like myself renders me barren!" The members of the MOTORBOOTY *meshpucheh* feel that their unwillingness to spawn is more than justified, given the traumatic experiences of their collective childhood. "I never had a chance in hell," complains Woolworth Van Husen III, sponge. "How was I supposed to be well adjusted when my parents forced me to chew with my mouth closed, flush after myself, and pay for my own gas?" Because of their dysfunctional backgrounds, the MOTORBOOTY brood have no use for the prime-time likes of the Bradens, Keatons, or Cosbys; their idea of a realistic TV family is the Mansons. "I hate the fucking Brady Bunch," says illegal alien Jimi Yetihung. "There

are two shining moments in the entire series run, pre-perm and post-perm: 'Greg's room,' and 'Bobby gets drums.' Otherwise, they can blow me."

Although MOTORBOOTY offspring tend to have an "I didn't ask to be born" attitude toward family responsibility, they are careful not to cut off all filial ties. Indeed, among the most honored Hallmark Card occasions on the MOTORBOOTY calendar (besides St. Ballantine's Day, Flip Wilson's Birthday, and Sweeps Week, of course) are Missing Father's Day, Stepmom Wednesday, and Rentsgiving. "I'll always keep in touch with the folks," confesses Pliny Younger, shrinkwrapper. "That is, as long as I'm still on the family payroll. I just wish there were an ATM by the mailbox so I wouldn't have to go inside."

Courtship: Eddie's Father Had It Easy

To hear them talk, one would assume that sincere MOTORBOOTY singles do nothing but fuck like sailors on a Bangkok holiday, but the naked truth is that they might as well be nuns. In theory, MOTORBOOTY swingers are all for sex, and lots of it—it's just the getting there that's the hard part. However, their lack of success has less to do with AIDS paranoia than their natural inclination towards chronic Dangerfieldism. "When I realize that some female is into me," says *Screw* subscriber Chester Fields, "my first thought is, 'She must be insane.'" While most MOTORBOOTY Johns and Janes don't have an ideal mate, they do have some pretty specific requirements. "It's hard to find some-

one who likes to do it to Negative Approach's *Tied Down*," says suffragette Anne Arbor, "and I hate wearing headphones." Unfit for the singles scene, their personal ads censored, MOTORBOOTY prowlers find their pickings rather slim; to them, pursuing a relationship means waiting for their best friend to break up with his or her partner. Consequently, they know they've finally found that special someone if their latest sleeping buddy hasn't already knocked boots with everyone they know.

When it comes to marriage, MOTORBOOTY courtiers figure that with the divorce rate now over 50%, there's not much point to going through all the showy expense and legal hassle. It isn't that they're afraid of commitment, it's just that with the heavy responsibilities of getting coffee and playing Pong®, they can scarcely find the time for long-term relationships. The fact that most MOTORBOOTY swingers have a high number of interfaces in their lifetimes doesn't mean that they don't take them seriously—they're just more efficient. While most couples spend years discovering all the disgusting rituals and annoying odors that eventually drive them to Splitsville, MOTORBOOTY suitors are able to sniff them out in a couple of hours. For them, waking up together is the equivalent of popping the question, and the joint lease is virtually a marriage certificate. "When you can live with your partner and bicker vigorously without being officially married," say twin brothers Sid and Marty Sidmartinson, "why make it legal when all that means is that if you split up they get to keep your plants?"



MEDIEVAL YOUTH

Just as we were going to press, MOTORBOOTY discovered that a burgeoning neo-medievalist post-punk sub-culture actually exists. Combining Agent Orange-style riffage with heated Arthurian rhetoric, proponents of "Serfcore" wear their chainmail with princely pride. To understand what this movement is all about, one need look no further than the anthemic manifesto "Medieval Kidz" by Frank-n-muth, MI rockers Lancelot Youth.

*We don't fuck with H.I.V.
Or modern-day diseases
Pneumonic and bubonic plagues
Are what it takes to please us*

*We stuff ourselves with mutton legs
And wash them down with grog
We don't use forks or etiquette
We wipe our hands on dogs*

*You can have your Eliot
Your Gertrude Stein, your Proust
Sumer Isa Cumen In
It's time to fuckin' joust*

CHORUS:

*Medieval Kidz, Medieval Kidz
Livin' in the past
You think it's brutal, but it's just feudal
So blow it out your ass!*

Education: From the Cradle to the Grave

To most MOTORBOOTY wisdom-seekers, the importance of higher education can't be understated. After a lifetime spent in an academic Habittrail®, they realize that a truly well-rounded college education can take quite a bit longer than the standard four-year "revolving door" curriculum that most rat-race-minded students settle for. "It's been the most stimulating two decades of my life," says B.A. hopeful Hugh Tsuk. "The demands of writing my term paper *Kant, Wittgenstein, Chico, and the Man* have forced me to take an indefinite career deferment." "I've never bought into that whole material goal thing," agrees anti-Barbie activist Penny Antee. "For me college isn't so much a stepping stone as a side-stepping stone."

Reaping the blessings of the liberalization of academia, MOTORBOOTY literati sport customized new majors tailored to their fleeting intellectual whims, making them experts in fields of their own concoction. "I'm the visiting Charles Nelson Reilly Chair of Passive Learning at Harvard next fall," says boy genius Dr. Sue Kretz. "As long as I can switch my shifts at Wendy's." Preferring to blaze their own educational trails, MOTORBOOTY autodidacts are on the cutting edge of curricular reform; as far as multiculturalism goes, MOTORBOOTY savants don't discriminate against anyone but Canadians. Typical of their enlightened attitude is their firm stand on the canon debate: "*Cannon* doesn't need expanding; it needs to be put back into syndication," says freelance scholar Hester Mudlaff. "That was William Conrad at the apex of his career."

Careers: Hate People, Love Breaks

Statistics show that most Americans are two months away from destitution; MOTORBOOTY Americans are two months past due, and running out of returnables. Although they're abundantly aware of the importance of having money, they're also morally opposed to the idea of working for it, and the only thing they hate worse than lining the pockets of their exploiters is getting up in the morning. "Tomorrow is the first day of the rest of my life," announces shotglass philosopher Sri Nimoy Bernstein. Though their alarm clock is perpetually set on the snooze button, it's dawned on them that not only won't they make as much money as their parents, they won't even make as much money as the poor white trash guy their parents hired to clean the swimming pool.

MOTORBOOTY moguls aren't merely between careers, they're beneath them. As sperm donor Dexter Nectar proclaims, "Joblessness is next to godliness." Their aversion to labor is well-founded, as they possess an embarrassment of job, having held every conceivable employment from bottle washer to peep-show deck swabby. Unfortunately, upper management tends to take a dim view of the work ethic embodied in MOTORBOOTY motivational phrases like "Service with a snarl" and "The customer is never right, and so what if he is?" Consequently, MOTORBOOTY laborers are forced to take jobs for which they are ridiculously overqualified, which accounts for the lunch counters of America being rife with deconstructionist dishwashers and Wobbly waitresses. In the words of Kahlil Girbaud, a vanity-press-published poet, "I've seen the best minds of my generation/Pedaling uphill with express-mail packages in their backpacks."

Shopping: From Thrift to Grift

Despite being chronically cash-poor, those of the MOTORBOOTY estate take their role as consumers seriously. Living far beyond their means, they precariously perform the (check-book) balancing act required to live a high-class lifestyle on a no-class income. Not content to get the most for their MOTORBOOTY dollar, they

insist on getting something for nothing. Realizing that a free pass earned is a penny saved, there's nothing they won't do: schmoozing with mortal enemies for a spot on a guest list, signing up for magazine subscriptions with no intention of making good, enlisting in record and book clubs under an alias, making sure that all the utility bills are in someone else's name, etc. And while it's true that the only thing lower than their tactics is their credit ratings, they still maintain impeccable standards: they buy only those records, books, and Gobots that they can resell at a later date. "My compact disc collection is as close as I come to a stock portfolio," says audiophile Claude Bols, "because I can easily go liquid with it when I'm not in the mood to busk."

Those of the MOTORBOOTY persuasion claim they don't believe in status symbols, but secretly they covet their neighbor's Discman®. Name brands are traumatic: having been emotionally scarred by the designer jean ass-wars of their childhood, they've come to realize how cumbersome clothes can be (but they're thankful that most people wear them). Because they find it impossible to fill out market surveys without randomly inserting the word "buttmeat," it's difficult for advertisers to pin down their demographic, so products aren't targeted at them so much as lobbied in their general direction. "You have to get up pretty early in the afternoon to fool these folks," says marketing clown Willis Nequebierd, "They'd just as soon ignore you as abhor you." In fact, true members of the MOTORBOOTY generation would never be caught dead with a magazine called *MOTORBOOTY*; they'd rather read *Sassy*.

**"knowing that taste is
in the ear of the
beholder doesn't stop
me from ridiculing
people who like
pearl jam!"**



Rock and Roll: Over

"Rock is dead, and there's no Santa Claus," says Isabelle Ringing, 22 going on 23. "Cry me a fuckin' river." Because they understand that the entertainment potential of rock and roll will always unintentionally outstrip its creators' noble aspirations, rock's passing away by its own hand hasn't stopped those of the MOTORBOOTY vibration from enjoying it anyway. MOTORBOOTY aficionados are gleefully aware of the irony of a youth-based music with no standard retirement age. "Who's to say there won't be 70- or 80-year-old Mick Jagers and Robert Plants out there shaking their money-makers?" says Gustav Verklemmt, sucker. "Soon they'll actually be the old bluesmen they've spent their careers imitating!"

With rock having been reduced to little more than a running joke as told by Kurt Loder, with punk and hardcore having already enjoyed their "glory nanoseconds," and with rap being too much like crashing someone else's party, the MOTORBOOTY mob's romance with rebellion has been and gone. They know that being on the cutting edge is as pointless as being in the mainstream, and now that Nirvana has taken the margin to the mall, there's really no difference anyway. "Underground is the place they bury you," says Harold Butz, program director at WCRP-FM. "Is this Nirvana, or Weird Al?" Of course, life wouldn't be as amusing for the MOTORBOOTY syndicate without the opportunity to snicker at those who haven't yet come to this realization: the rank and file of the booboisie who wear their mindset like a duncecap, donning the costume of someone else's rebellion as if it were their own. "The very idea of mohicans, skinheads, or ska kids," says *Crimson Loaf* editor-in-chief Victoria Ciekret, "is like somebody and their friends suddenly deciding to be Elizabethan imps and getting really into lutes. The chef at Jose's Frijole Hut cooks up more genuine trouble in one lunch-rush than any of those simps will see in a lifetime."

Nostalgia: Just Say Now

If you actually lived through the '70s, why would you want to bring them back?

Politics: We're Mad as Hell and We're Not Going To Do Anything About It

The MOTORBOOTY constituency already knows that the world has been shaved by a drunken barber and they don't need to sign a petition about it. They follow the news, but mostly because the news follows *Oprah*. Given the choice between Democrat and Republican, those of the MOTORBOOTY caucus opt for Vernors. "I'd sooner vote for George Clinton than Bill Clinton," says fluffer Barbara Q. Ribbs, endorsing the nominee from the Ain't Nothin' But A Party Party.

Because members of the MOTORBOOTY polity take for granted that "absolute power corrupts absolutely," they're unfettered by such utopian ideals as World Peace and World Party. But MOTORBOOTY peons are troubled less by

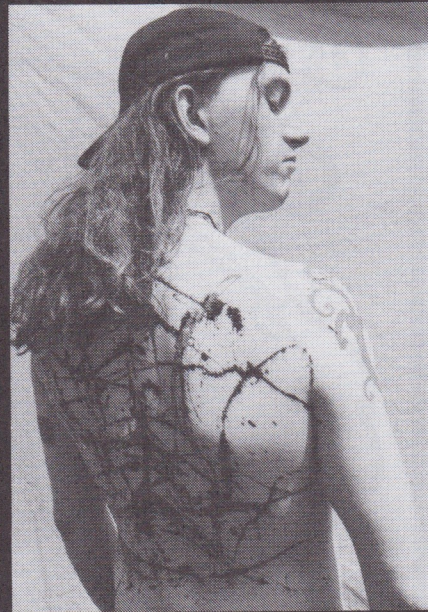


BODY OVER MIND

For those who thought that spleen scarification and pancreas Prince Alberts were the last frontier of body art, MOTORBOOTY has uncovered a most dynamic new trend: the abstract expressionist tattoo. "We've finally thrown off the shackles of form and representation that have plagued this art form since the days of Popeye," proclaims Ab-Ex pioneer Orlando Florida. "Now ink can adorn the dermal canvas in pure primal splendor!" The fact

the brutal immorality of the wealthy and powerful than by their own lack of wealth and power. When it comes to the day-to-day crossfire of American partisan politics, the MOTORBOOTY lobby are as fed up with the belly-aching, bumbling anti-establishment as with the establishment. They have no time for politically promiscuous Sandalistas and Trustafarians who yearn for those halcyon times when there was just one heroic issue to care about: keeping your ass out of boot camp. To many foundlings, the Gulf War provided a similar opportunity to test their mettle as a political force, but the quaint restagings of any given Vietnam protest rally smacked more of "those were the days" than "hell no we won't go." As party pooper Dick DaFone reports, "Acoustic guitars, they make me retch."

Despite their aversion to activism, MOTORBOOTY partisans resent being told that they don't possess strong leadership qualities, when in fact they've always been at the forefront of any backlash movement. And unlike the previous generation, who blame their ineffectiveness on Watergate, Bicentennial burnout, and Skylab, the MOTORBOOTY defendants take full responsibility for the consequences of their own actions, and even those of others. "Sorry about that oil thing in Alaska," says Jerry Atric, arm-chair proctologist, "I wanted to help clean up, but I had to wash my car."



PHOTOS BY PHIL DÜRR

that Ab-Ex tattooing can be excruciatingly painful hasn't slowed the traffic to Mr. Florida's studio at all. "A great man once said that all good art comes from some kind of pain," says wincing customer Dick Timbre, "and whatever this thing on my back is supposed to be, it proves it!"

"Iheartit!" says body customizer Rose Royce of her attractively amorphous new ink. "I don't know what it is, but it looks so damn modern that I don't even care!"

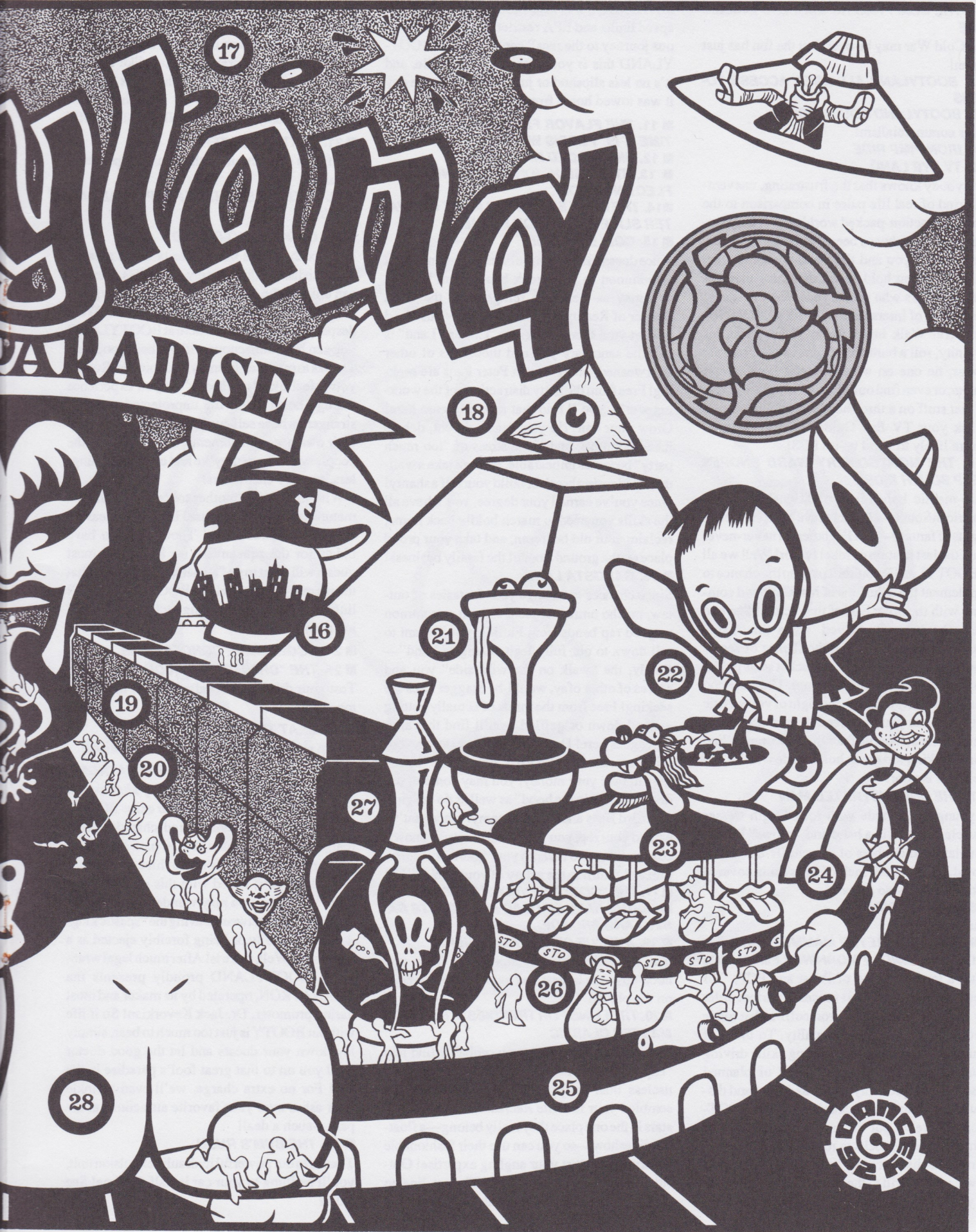
Future: Uncertain (End: Near)

"The legacy of the '60s is rednecks smoking pot," says Dung Beadle, a veteran of something he doesn't fully remember, "and the legacy of punk is football players with stupid haircuts. Maybe the MOTORBOOTY Generation will have a legacy too, if they ever really do anything."

Judged by the standards of previous youth herds, the achievements of MOTORBOOTY nation are thus far negligible, but to those possessed of the MOTORBOOTY *je ne sais quoi*, these yardsticks of comparison are laughably irrelevant. MOTORBOOTY street fighters have made the resistance of false expectations their life's work, and they aren't about to compromise their principles in order to satisfy the deadline requirements of those who would write pseudo-sociological "thinkpieces" about them. Though they may not have the connections to get laid, the mettle to get married, the references to get a job, or the will to change the world, at least they have the gall to make fun of those who do. It's this courage to be exactly who they are—no matter how shiftless and unproductive—that sets the MOTORBOOTY generation apart. As MOTORBOOTY poster child Eileen Dover says, "Don't just do something—stand there." ■

Number of times the word "MOTORBOOTY" appears in this article: 64.

PARADISE



■ 1. THE SLIM PICKENS SURPLUS MISSILE RIDE

The Cold War may be over, but the fun has just begun!

■ 2. BOOTYLAND ALL-AREA ACCESS TO-KENS

■ 3. BOOTYLAND SOUVENIRS

Class commercialism!

■ 4. IRON PIMP RIDE

■ 5. TV EYE LAND

Everybody knows that the frustrating, uneventful grind of real life pales in comparison to the fun-filled, action-packed world of TV! Unfortunately, there's always been that pesky glass barrier between you and the small-screen characters whom you hold so much dearer than the near-strangers who raised you! Now, thanks to the miracle of Interactive BOOTYVISION, you are there! Walk in on *James at 15* losing his virginity, roll a bum with *Captain Kool and the Kongs*, tie one on with *Lancelot Link, Secret Chimp*, or even find out why the Howells brought all that stuff on a three hour cruise! But be sure to ask your TV Eye Guide for directions, or you're likely to wind up on PBS!

■ 6. THE MONTGOMERY WARD SNOPE DEEP SOUTH RIDE

Euro-mantic bohemians traditionally see the American South—à la Nick Cave's ripple-soaked flights of fantasy—as a Faulknerian never-never land, the last bastion of rebel fervor! Well we all at BOOTYLAND couldn't pass up the chance to supplement the delusions of Mr. Cave and company with the other half of the picture! See two men who haven't shaved since Sherman's march! Watch as they fan the flames of secession by sitting motionless on bucket seats pulled from Cousin Enos' El Camino! They are too drunk to work! Although the sight of voyeuristic outsiders like you may send them reaching for their gun rack, have no fear; they are nearly blind from drinking too much homemade whisky and their aim is poor!

■ 7. THE UNILLUSTRATED MAN

A young white male with rock-length tresses who claims to be in a band and "knows" Bimini Toubiafore and others of the cutoffs-and-tights crowd. . . but every inch of his skin is covered with *absolutely no tattoos!*

■ 8. BUMPER PUNKS

Mindless fun!

■ 9. THE RUSS MEYER MAMMERHORN

■ 10. THE MONDAY MORNING LEMON RIDE

After a long weekend of Pabst and PCP, '70s clock-punchers had their senses in perfect order for slapping together the iron coffins that made Detroit synonymous with quality. To those of you who acquired your motoring skills driving mommy's Honda, the excitement of planned obsolescence probably seems as quaint and distant as grandpappy's Packard, but here at BOOTYLAND we've put the fun back into driving! Without shoulder belts to restrain you, rearview mirrors to distract you, or brakes to slow you down, you'll thrill to the sound of knocking rods as you slouch behind the wheel of a three-ton

MOTORBOOTY lead-burner, breaking both speed limits and EPA restrictions on your perilous journey to the recall center! Yes, at BOOTYLAND this is your father's Oldsmobile, and it's no less slipshod or jury-rigged than the day it was towed home from the dealership!

■ 11. THE FLAVOR FLAV "TELL 'EM WHAT TIME IT IS" FERRIS WHEEL

■ 12. BIG-HEADED MASCOTS

■ 13. THE BRIAN JONES MEMORIAL REFLECTING POOL

■ 14. THE GENE SIMMONS "LICK IT UP" WATER SLIDE AND BLOOD FLUME

■ 15. COLLEGE LAND

Since decent, rewarding jobs have become about as common as good rock bands from Boston, you may as well take refuge from the Grim Reaper of Reality for as long as your trust fund will let you! Our prestigious "College Land" is just the sanctuary you and thousands of other overweaned, underwritten Peter Pans are seeking! Free from the petty distractions of the working world, you'll find that anything goes here! Grow your hair, rip your jeans, do pot, debate inane minutiae, and if the stress of "too much party" becomes unbearable, you can take a well-deserved spring break or build yourself a shanty! Once you've earned your degree, you'll have all the skills you need to march boldly back home, reclaim your old bedroom, and take your proud place on the ground floor of the family business!

■ 16. GANGSTA LAND

Since chances to indulge your fantasies of outlaw, macho omnipotence are about as common as good rap bands from Florida, you'll want to roll down to our fully-legit "Gangsta Land"—finally, the "walk on the wild side" you and scores of other ofay, would-be Stagger Lees are seeking! Free from the threat of actually getting gunned down or gaffled, you'll find that anything goes here! Drop some science, touch your thing, crack a 40, wear a hat, and if some "bitch" tries to take your money, you may come to understand "life in the hood" as well as do the guys from 3rd Bass and Public Enemy! Once you've earned your rep, you'll have all the street knowledge you need to reclaim your *Source* subscription and return to the safety of your NWA CDs!

■ 17. THE "GOODBYE VINYL" SKEET SHOOT

■ 18. THE HALL OF DEAD PRESIDENTS CASINO AND ARCADE

■ 19. AVENUE OF THE AMPLIFIERS

You'll feel just like Al Jourgensen when you hook up to the largest and loudest laser karaoke on the planet!

■ 20. TROLLING FOR TRENDIES: THE PIERCE MASTER CLASSIC

Like us here at the park, you probably find few "expressions of individuality" more vapid and useless than body piercing! Well, we've assembled your favorite *Re/Search* modprim all-stars in the one place they really belong—a floating sideshow—so you can use their fashionable deformities to test your angling expertise! Outfitted with everything from 10lb test line to Zebco's Spruance-Class Freak-Seeking Sonar

(from our Bait and Switch Tackle Shop) you can make like Babe Winkleman as you reel in your disfigured idiot! Gape in wonder as water issues forth from its perforated genitals like a sprinkler! And, if your future trophy gives you any lip, you're encouraged to hit it on the noggin with your trusty BOOTYLAND "reality gaff!"

■ 21. YERTLE THE TERLET

Shiftfights every hour on the hour! Proper attire required.

■ 22. THE LITTLEFONT OF PERPETUAL CAFEINE

■ 23. GROUPIE-GO-ROUND

Everybody knows that celebrity is the greatest aphrodisiac! Unfortunately, nobodies like you can only seethe with envy at the sexual exploits of rock stars, actresses, and clergymen. Well, despair no more, because here at BOOTYLAND you can be promiscuous without being popular! Thanks to our loser-friendly Groupie-Go-Round, you'll feel like "somebody" as you experience the ego boost of having unprotected sex with strangers whose self-worth is determined not by their own accomplishments, but by those of the people with whom they've had cheap, meaningless, squishy encounters!

With its unique "mother tongue" design, this mature-riders-only carousel is built to pleasure folks of all three sexes! Though we do have bidets for the squeamish, we know that most guests will want to go "au naturel," to ensure that the memory of their trip to BOOTYLAND will linger for the many dripping, itching, and burning months to come!

■ 24. AGGRESSIVE CONCESSIONS

■ 25. THE "DRIVE IT OFF" RIDE

Test your driving skills after you've had a few too many!

■ 26. BEAT THE DEVIL

White male bashing for the disenfranchised!

■ 27. OL DOC KEVORKIAN'S THANATRON®

While we understand that a quality afternoon at BOOTYLAND may expose your extra-BOOTY life as the hollow, uncentered charade that it really is, the park closes at 8:30 p.m. sharp, and we simply can't afford to hire any more groundskeepers. Faced with this grim "boot or bum" dilemma, you may wonder if there's any middle ground between leaving the "spastic kingdom" voluntarily or being forcibly ejected as a trespasser. Well, there is! After much legal wrangling, BOOTYLAND proudly presents the THANATRON, operated by its maker and most daring promoter, Dr. Jack Kevorkian! So if life without BOOTY is just too much to bear, simply lay down your ducats and let the good doctor send you on to that great fool's paradise in the sky! For no extra charge, we'll even sprinkle your ashes over your favorite attractions at the park—such a deal!

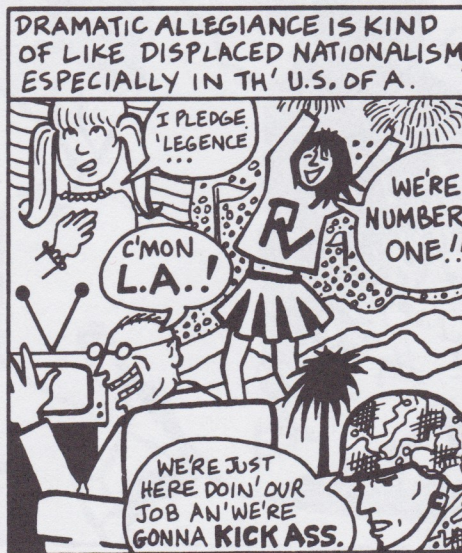
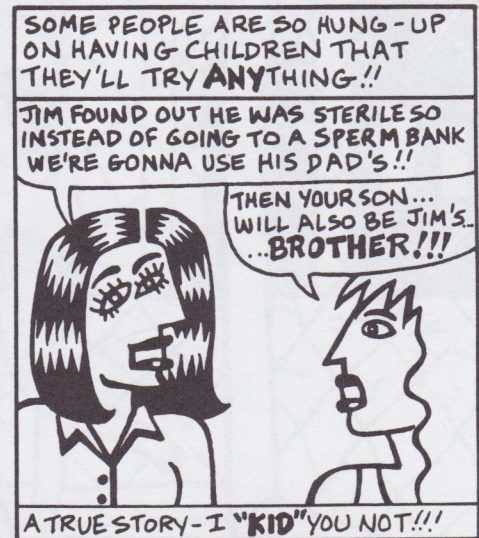
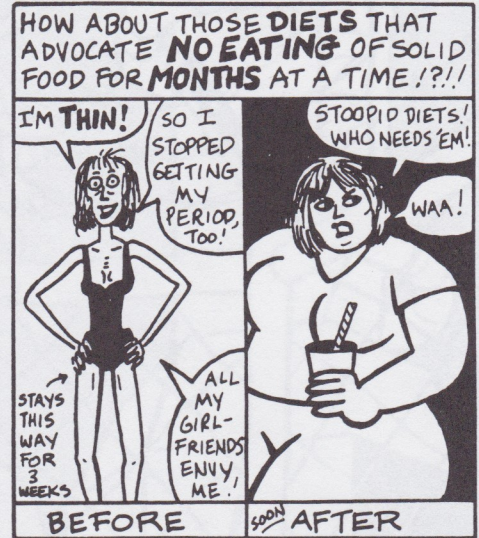
■ 28. THE BUM'S RUSH

Thanks to our powerful hydraulic expulsion unit, you'll be flung to your car in half the time! See ya! ■

THERE WAS THE "BEAT", THEN THE "LOVE" AND THE "ME". NOW MAKE WAY FOR:

THE EXTREME GENERATION!

©MARY FLEENER. 1991



THE END



©1992
danny
Hellman

BY
ROB MICHAELS

MILES

RUNS THE VOODOO DOWN

There's gotta be a million *American Bandstand* "Rate-A-Records" where some Copper-toned and Clearasiled beach babe gives one of the week's platters a 10 "'cause it's got a great beat," and like me, y'all probably had a hard time grasping exactly what she was drivin' at. Was she talking technical, like about the time signature or something, or was she merely referring to how often the bass drum got hit in a certain intuitively measured unit of time (said unit probably being equal to the number of volt-jolts she and all the other kids felt hitting their all-too agitated loins each hormonal millisecond)? All I know is that however you define it, what she meant by "beat" seems closely connected to time, something that happens at deliberately chosen intervals, and compared to

rhythm this "beat" seems downright petty, 'cause rhythm connotes something far more continuous and universal, something profound and organic, a never-ending echo from the Big Bang, vibrating all of the way from the depths of Lake Victoria to every backseat and bedroom across middle America. In other words, rhythm is like an endless trough of cum-heavy gumbo, boiling and bubbling just beneath the crust of the earth, the undulating hum of the collective unconscious, the quadrophonic heartbeat of Jehovah, permeating the world in silent Surround-sound®, primed for direct sonic articulation by those few musical superfolk willing to dig the deepest.

The upshot of all this nonsense is that the true gods of the superrhythmic grunt, the James

Browns, Bo Diddleys, and Elvin Joneses of the world, didn't really create new types of music as much as they provided a more direct, more holistic conduit for a force that already existed. They took things into a realm beyond ideas and emotions, a realm of primal, free-form coolness, a realm of pure, seamless, rhythm, and it's at the fleshy and convulsive heart of this realm that the late Miles Davis began his best work of the early-to-mid 1970s. Without going into much historical detail, the testy Mr. Davis closed out the '60s with a controversial but characteristic move into the world of electric music. His initial efforts, such as *In a Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew*, were tasteful and well received, Miles' lonely and insinuating trumpet remaining unamplified and undistorted at the



music's fore. As usual, Miles refused to keep folks happy by repeating his triumphs. Increasingly influenced by rock, funk, and African music, he soon began to push in a more radical direction, creating music that was louder, heavier, freer, and more cacophonous than any he had made before. With his back turned on all self-appointed guardians of morals, good taste, and jazz purity, Miles became a snappily dressed shaman of brick-thick, feedback voodoo, a balls-out, groove-crazed avenger, probing the inner- and outermost reaches of deafening, rhythmic bombast and Congo-rific, drum-driven noise. Modulated with godless, electronic gadgetry, Davis' trumpet was less lyrical than ever before, and its harsh, impatient slurs were often buried in the surrounding protoplasmic wail.

Needless to say, the records of this period are crucial chunks of Motherland homage, stone age-new-age freefalls into the pulsing well-spring of rhythmic creation, ever-living proof of the occasional virtues of foamy-mouthed musical excess. And despite the varying contexts and personnel, these discs seem linked by some private primordial code, with different melodic figures appearing and reappearing across vinyl boundaries, evidence of the live, acoustic membrane underlying Miles' fearless sonic rituals. Even LP and song titles reflect the historical immensity of Davis' job, the sense of collective communion with an ancient and universal life-force—e.g., *Agharta*, the underground Tibetan city built by disgruntled emigrés from Atlantis, or Gondwana and Pangaea, colliding super-continent mulching the planet's surface like so many fields of vine-ripe Acapulco Gold. Of course, these records didn't earn Miles too many friends at the time of their release: too spastic and unpredictable for rock dogs and funkateers, too brash and amplified for conservative jazzbos ("too jerky and bombastic for most listeners," says *The Rolling Stone Jazz Record Guide*). But since we here at MOTORBOOTY don't have many friends either, we've got nothing to lose by saying it straight—this shit rules, and here are just a few choice samples in descending order of preference.

1. *Agharta* (1975)

Heck with the trade surplus, the realest blessing that we ever gave the Japanese was the opportunity to experience this mother live. Four sides of rock-solid, post-nirvanic space funk that has its fat little finger firmly planted on the G-spot of Mother Earth. Side one opens with "Prelude Part I," a juicy firestorm of wah-wah heaven that's so stone deep, so butt-intensively heavy that it'd have Vernon "funkless" Reid boogiein' like the mayor of Disco, Michigan, faster than you could say "hide that merkin." Drummer Al Foster lays down a reckless but steady 4/4 over Mtume's righteously clattering percussion while Michael Henderson gives a much-needed lesson in genuinely funky post-

Larry Graham bass artillery. Pete Cosey and Reggie Lucas maul their guitars with oozing fury, leaving a wake of gelatinous, Sharrock-damaged spume as Miles lets off some steam on the organ, crashing through the noise like a couthless, uninvited yahoo at a Scarsdale Sweet 16. Sonny Fortune cries bloody murder on his soprano and Miles slithers through the chaos with his wah-wah pedaled, axe-like trumpet. As your head bangs, or more accurately rotates all hellbound and hypnotized like one of those spring-necked figurines they sell at Tiger Stadium, the groove continues to expand and contract, and before you know it, Miles shifts the band into an elastic and loose-limbed vamp that practically implodes all into its big, bad self. Incredibly, the jam never really lets up, though its mood and texture are in constant flux. And against the prevailing atmosphere of ceaseless bombast, the band no doubt plays as one, its telepathy even more marvelous in light of the serious volume they must have been generating. Hell, there're even some moments of extreme beauty, subtle and haunting passages that seem to hang in miair, their timeless implications flurrying down to terra firma like so much heavenly sweat. Living proof that fusion wasn't always a four-letter word.

2. *On the Corner* (1973)

Even extended study of Corky McCoy's pimplitudinous Kid Dynamite-damaged cover cartoon couldn't prepare you for the palpitating butt-funky jism splash that is *On the Corner*. Described by Miles as a mixture of James Brown, Sly Stone, Ornette Coleman, Paul Buckmaster and Karlheinz Stockhausen, *On the Corner* is a pulsing, liquid maelstrom of harmonologically free-associated funk. Compared to the (relatively) streamlined, inertia-driven chug of *Agharta* or *Jack Johnson*, this record expands like a nuke-fueled blowout kit: it takes no stab at standard linear development but instead just gets progressively bigger, an ever-fattening Afro-cubist balloon, its heart set on Harrare and its hamhocks frying in Harlem. Instead of traditional tunes or heads, the band improvises layer upon layer of sinuously replicating grooves, coupling and uncoupling like so many funk-fortified strands of electric DNA. There's also "Black Satin," the closest thing to a pop song on any of these platters, a sly, elastic web of sub-continental hypnosis and proto-hip-hop hustle that would sound just peachy blaring from your favorite FM powerhouse. All in all, a singular jammy for the ages.

3. *Get Up With It* (1974)

The last studio LP before *Agharta/Pangea* and Miles' subsequent five-year vice-filled retirement ("I was interested in what some people would call kinky sex, you know . . .") is a star-studded grab bag of eerie, forlorn lyricism and seething, pent-up funk. Although it starts off like a moodier, flute-infected take on ABC's *Wide World of Sports* theme, "Maiysha" soon

becomes a smarmy, growling funkfest. Even better are "Honky Tonk," a gutbucket workout of osmium-like density, and "Rated X," a sinister slice of clenched-jaw cyberfunk, featuring some of Miles' most audaciously dissonant organ playing (he doesn't even pick up the trumpet on this one). But the crown jewel of this set has to be "Calypso Frelimo," 32 minutes of craven, polyrhythmic wilding and unspeakably improvised drum-demon possession—among the coolest sides of music ever recorded, Dave Liebman's occasional flute shots notwithstanding. Extra bonuses include "Red China Blues," a sticky-fingered South Side juke jam, and "Billy Preston," a 12-minute homage to the most perverted fifth Beatle we know (but we're still waiting for a sufficiently heavy tribute to the "freakin' deacon," Mr. Sherman Hemsley)

4. *Dark Magus* (1974)

Wherein Miles, two saxes, three guitars, bass, drums and perc give old Carnegie Hall a lesson in living ectoplasmic natural history that's probably still vibrating through its oh-so-hallowed halls. Though it was recorded a year before *Agharta/Pangea*, the crucial elements are all firmly in place: Al Foster's not-just-knee-deep Africanized Bonzoisms, Mtume's atomized percussive downpour, howling layers of six-string heavy mental, and the ever-restless Miles, one minute molesting the organ, the next minute breathing sparse sublimity on the trumpet. And as a bonus for good behavior, Miles throws not one but two saxophones into the stew, and Azar Lawrence and Dave Liebman reach *Meditations*-like heights in their too-infrequent *tête-à-têtes* for Pharoah-istic skronk supremacy. Side one, "Moja," leaps out of the blocks with wild-eyed abandon, with Miles' gurgling and sputtering trumpet leading the way. Pretty soon, everyone gets antsy with the groove and starts taking little chunks of it apart, and in the heat of the frustrated moment every nugget gets smashed beyond recognition. Shifting gears like a funkier Naked City, the band desperately tries battering the demons they've evoked back into some sort of submission, and meet with little success—nine grown men scarcely in control of their own monstrous creation. "Will" (side two) and "Tatu" (side three) range from shrill, ululating cock rock to hovering, melodic ESP, all without any beginnings, middles or ends to get in the way: just pure, slimy waves of sonic destiny. Although "Nne" (side four) tends to meander (sounds a bit too much like "Soup," Can's babbling celebration of diaper mess), it has the decency to end with a right hairy conniption of ear-burning chaos. The verdict: very loud, very ecologically correct.

5. *Pangea* (1975)

Though it's nearly impossible to believe, four sides of *Agharta* didn't allow this band to fully speak its piece—Miles had to bring 'em back

that night to unleash another couple discs of power-amp improv on their lucky Nipponese hosts. The first record, "Zimbabwe" parts I and II, is by far the heavier of the two. In moments of raging, proto-hardcore fury, the band flails forward like a hot-wired, *Soul Train*-ed Sasquatch, Mtume's crumbling and entropic percussion pulling each riff apart no sooner than everyone else lays the next one down. Miles and Sonny Fortune testify over the rhythm section's massive, churning bottom while the guitars virtually explode in a nightmare of Marshall-stacked excess. While reference points aren't real easy to come by, "Zimbabwe" is probably closest to an Afrocentric constellation of Black Sabbath's brontosaur crunch, Sun Ra's cosmic looseness, and early Funkadelic's inner-city angst—undoubtedly a very funky ancestor of the best of Last Exit. Record two, "Gondwana" parts I and II is comparatively quiet and pensive. Though it's definitely amplified, Miles' horn sounds relatively mild and intimate, leading the band through an extended post-psych black power raga, a subtle, borderless throb, ebbing and flowing through your boudoir like warm, electric lava.

6. *A Tribute to Jack Johnson* (1971)

Forget all the foregoing hogwash re: heavy-handed hyper-rhythmic quicksand, 'cause like its namesake, *A Tribute to Jack Johnson* is a lean, mean, in-your-face rock and roll fighting machine. "Right Off," which takes up all of side one, finds Miles' newly electrified sextet in fine racing form. Billy Cobham (drums) and Michael Henderson (bass) pound out a crisp, muscular backbeat, while Herbie Hancock generously greases the groove with his dense and abrasive keyboards. Miles' swaggering trumpet sounds unusually bright and direct, delivering repeated jabs to that poop-filled pumpkin your loved ones charitably call your head, while Steve Grossman blows some shrill and heated soprano. And in one of the best illustrations of why Anglos shouldn't mess with Eastern religions, the pre-Krishna John McLaughlin slices his way through the melody like a vengeful Ginsu, tossing jagged thunderbolts of six-string shrapnel at every angle of the groove. "Yesternow," which covers side two, starts off in a moodier mode, recalling Miles' classic acoustic quartet of the early Sixties. Miles suspends his carefully chosen notes in space, punctuating his solo with rich outbursts of silence. Midway through the side, the band shifts into a stuttering, Jimidelic rock riff. McLaughlin seizes the moment and once again proves how bad he used to be, while in the other channel, Sonny Sharrock launches a series of uncredited git-fiddle Scud strikes, leaving a happy wake of astro-industrial fallout. Rumor has it that producer Teo Macero actually assembled much of this record from prerecorded tape fragments, and if it's true, more power to him. The world is always too short of mainline power crunch of this caliber, even if it is just an afterthought. ■



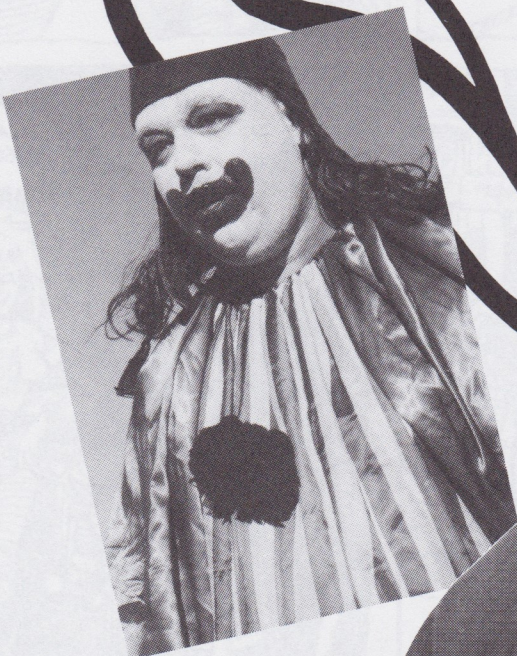
ME 'n' HER

by T. LABAN © 91





cram it, CLOWNIE!



*"Mr. X" today,
and (inset)
in happier times*

ONE GUY SPEAKS OUT!

"The mirth the clown creates grows in proportion to the humiliation he is forced to endure."

—Buffo the Clown, from Angela Carter's novel *Nights at the Circus*

"Just keep laughing!"—Bozo the Clown

Until its introduction into American culture, clowning was among the most highly respected professions in the world. For centuries, clowns enjoyed a unique social status and were as well-loved as poets or village idiots. This curious state of affairs was quickly corrected by pioneering entrepreneurs like P.T. Barnum, who had the perspicacity to transform clowning from an art form almost French in its uselessness, into an American industry as lucrative as life insurance or televangelism.

Perhaps no single man has understood the profit potential of clowns as well as Larry Harmon, who took a simple, theoretically lovable character called Bozo the Clown and turned it into a billion-dollar empire dedicated to promoting gentle slapstick, impulse buying, and Harmon himself. Through his television show, his record albums, his cartoons, and his multitudinous merchandise, Harmon's Bozo touched the hearts and pocketbooks of millions of Americans.

In an effort to get to know the man behind the clown, MOTORBOOTY made many unsuccessful attempts to reach Mr. Harmon's impenetrable headquarters, and it was only under the pretense of representing a legitimate newsweekly that we were able to reach someone in Mr. Harmon's office (for lack of evidence to the contrary, we'll assume it was Mr. Harmon himself). Unfortunately, the results of our quest left much to be desired. (Complete transcription: MOTORBOOTY: Hey-dee-hoo and a howdy to you, Bozo! HARMON: Excuse me? MOTORBOOTY: I mean, did you know from the beginning you'd one day be "The World's Most Famous Clown?" HARMON:>click<) However, after much pseudo-journalistic muck-raking, we were able to find someone to break the Bozo code of silence in the person of Manny X. (not his real name), who claims to have been a "franchise Bozo" in Philadelphia (a claim that MOTORBOOTY researchers have been unable to substantiate). Presently an outpatient at the

Frances Farmer Convalescent Center in Vernon, Florida, Mr. X gave us an entertaining, if not entirely verifiable lecture on the politics of Bozo.

■ **MOTORBOOTY:** *Can you give us some background on Bozo?*

■ **MR. X:** Of course. I've got the whole damn story of Bozo memorized. Alan Livingston, the vice president in charge of A&R at Capitol Records, wrote and produced the first Bozo the Capitol Clown record in 1946. The records came with these little booklets that kids were supposed to turn when they heard the sound of a bell. Originally, Bozo was played by a circus clown named Pinto Colvig, not Larry Harmon. The "multi-talented" Mr. Harmon was making a name for himself on "the stage," in "movies," and on radio shows like *The Great Gildersleeve*, as the guy who could sing like Ethel Merman. He did stuff like "Anyone You Can Do," and "Song In My Pants." Classics. He got into television as Commander Comet, a sort of Captain Video knockoff, only wackier and with more commercials. Then he got the bright idea of bringing Bozo to the tube, with Bozo to be played by him. Although he claims that the first live-action Bozo appeared in 1957, I happen to know that *The Bozo Show* first aired on KTLA-TV in 1949. Whatever. It was all just a copy of *The Howdy Doody Show*, which makes Bozo a Clarabell ripoff.

■ **Where do you think the name came from? I've heard that it was in the title of an 11th century book about Gypsy comedians, or that it's from the Bozosawalsti tribe of Mali, or that it's just made up.**

■ I don't really care where it came from, I just know that that fuck owns it.

■ **What do you think about the derisive ways that "Bozo" and "clown" have come to be used? Have you seen the "No Bozos" shirts and stickers?**

■ (shouts) Shit pants! Pardon me. Harmon licensed all that stuff himself, along with the Bozo phone that goes "yuk yuk yuk," the inflatable dolls, and the limited edition gold-leafed porcelain Bozos, and the Bozo bologna. (roars) Damn you to hell! Excuse me. Listen, from the beginning he realized the marketing potential for this Bozo thing and started franchising the hell out of it. He sold franchises to different stations around the country, and controlled quality by training all the regional Bozos the same way. So he had national continuity with local flavor, the best of both worlds. You know, Willard Scott was a Bozo in Washington, D.C. Harmon trained him. If you think about it, weathermen usually are the clowns of the newscast.

■ **So the whole Bozo franchise operation was sort of like McDonald's.**

■ No, McDonald's is sort of like Bozo. As a matter of fact, Ray Kroc begged Harmon to help him develop a clown of his own. He even rented a Bozo until he got his Ronald McDonald going. Ronald McDonald. I take one look at that fey buffoon and think "Why bother?" Then there



DREAM ALONG WITH BOZO

Fifteen years before Pete Townshend's "rock opera" *Tommy* elevated rock and roll to levels of pretension never before thought possible (or necessary), Golden Records released *Dream Along With Bozo*, the world's first "concept album." Although there is really no "theme" involved, each of *Dream Along With Bozo's* 18 tracks are precariously tied together by the concept of Bozo's puerile dreams. Bozo's flights of fancy find him travelling through time and space, to distant planets and foreign lands, stopping every once in a while to interject a little clownish wisdom, which is punctuated by his unmistakably retarded laugh.

In "We're Americans," Bozo cheerfully extolls the virtues of blind patriotism, and in "Bozo's Marching Song," he happily prepares his young listeners for the thrill of selective service. "Keep Your Eyes Open" is a bit of unsolicited advice given to Christopher Columbus, who nearly steers too far astern of the New World. "How" describes the difficulty Bozo has communicating with the Native Americans, who, for some reason "just keep talking Indian." As if "How" didn't contain enough derogatory generalizations, "Bozo's Holiday" stereotypes nearly every nationality in Europe, and "Honorable Bozo," which finds Bozo clowning around in Japan, couldn't be more racist if it used the word "zipperhead." There are even vague hints of Cold War rhetoric, embodied in characters like Slippery Fly, the International Spy, and Big Shortie and Short Biggie, Bozo's arch-enemies, who at one point are trying to "steal Bozo's secrets." Bozo's warped sensibilities are perhaps best summed up in "Bozo's Pocket Rocket," which boldly proclaims "I found something in one of my pockets/It was about as big as your shoe/But it was shaped like a rocket!"

The music is full of spastic melodies and hyperactive rhythms, to which Bozo's trademark half-step-flat singing style provides a disconcerting counterpart. Listening to *Dream Along With Bozo*, with its twisted morality and its maniacal optimism, it's easy to understand why so many children born in the '50s eventually turned to drugs. —David Merline ■

THE COMPETITION

Among the most profound effects of the baby boom was the creation of an entirely new form of entertainment—the kiddie show.

Although still in its infancy itself, TV was quick to fill the role as babysitter for millions of pre-school age kids, and advertisers were even quicker to exploit what they realised was their biggest market ever. Aware that they had been given the responsibility of shaping the minds of an entire generation, both the networks and their affiliates began broadcasting hour after hour of toy and cereal commercials interspersed with cartoons and puppet shows, all introduced by a wacky, theoretically loveable host. Between the years of 1952 and 1970 there were more than 27 such shows in the Detroit area alone. Many of these shows were introduced by makeshift “characters” like Captain Jolly, Poop Deck Paul, Jingles, or Johnny Ginger, but the most successful kiddie shows were hosted by clowns. In the Motor City, there were the Big Three:

■ **MILKY**—“Not a real clown.” Figurehead of the Twin Pines Milk comprehensive marketing strategy. Wore milk-white face and flowing gown in French Pierrot style. “Twin Pines” was secret word on show. Posed a serious threat to Bozo’s hegemony. Now exists only on sides of quart containers.

■ **OOPSY**—“The Merchant of Mirth.” Secretly jealous “fallen Bozo.” Wore flower pot hat. Benevolent Dictator of Daisyville. Marketing whore who marched in parades wearing a sandwich board that read “Your Advertisement Here.”



■ **HAPPY HUMPHREY**—“Kids Love Him, So Do Sponsors.” Wore grotesque expressionless makeup and long eyelashes. Entertained children at Saugatuck nudist colony. Famous for having career ruined by man/boy love scandal. ■

was Topsy, the Goebels beer clown. Bad idea, terrible idea.

■ **Why . . . ?**

■ Why do I think Bozo was such a hit? What the hell kind of question is that?

■ **Actually, I was going to ask “Why that hair?” It’s probably the most identifiable and most appropriated element of Bozo’s style.**

■ Well, for your information, circus clowns depend on their makeup for their livelihood, so it’s not uncommon for them to copyright their faces.

■ **So . . . ?**

■ So, Harmon owns the whole Bozo get-up, including the hair, and anyone who wears an outrageously exaggerated male-pattern baldness wig probably has to pay him a royalty.

■ **What do you have against Bozo?**

■ Bozo ruined my life, that’s all.

■ **So why did Bozo become so popular?**

■ I don’t know what it is, but kids love clowns. Give ‘em a guy in white-face and they go nuts! Crying, screaming, running away! A clown is the quickest way to a kid’s heart, and advertisers know that kids are the quickest way to a parent’s pocket. And when you’ve got a clown who not only hawks your cereal on TV but makes personal appearances in the cereal aisle of your local Piggly Wiggly? Bingo!

■ **So do you think that’s why . . .**

■ Boring! Why don’t you ask me some interesting questions for a change?

■ **OK, Did you always want to be a clown?**

■ Of course I didn’t want to be any damned clown. Like any normal kid, I wanted to rob banks like Jesse James when I grew up, but I was afflicted with Tourette’s syndrome, a baffling neurological disorder which causes involuntary and obscene outbursts. It’s something I’ve been battling all my life, but I’ve learned to control it through sheer force of will. My parents were just humble, understanding nobodies who let me do whatever I wanted, as long as I did everything they said, kept my mouth shut and didn’t become an entertainer. For a long time I tried to stifle my true instincts, but it was pure hell. Unless you’re naturally gifted like myself, I don’t think you can begin to imagine what it’s like to hide such enormous talent. Oh, I experimented with thespianism in high school, but it wasn’t until college that I openly defied my parents and decided to follow my destiny and . . . well, follow my destiny. I went to the University of Southern California and became a cheerleader, and I never looked back. (*says loudly*) I wonder what my balls would feel like on your chin!

■ **What do your parents think of you now?**

■ They’re dead, of course.

■ **I’m sorry.**

■ Don’t be. I’m glad they’re not around to see how I’ve turned out.

■ **How did you get started?**

■ After a couple of days at USC, I enrolled in the Ringling Brothers Clown College in Jacksonville, Florida. I majored in pratfalls, but I also became pretty good at “working the rubber.”

■ **Clowns wear condoms?**

■ Don’t be an ass. “Working the rubber” means making balloon animals, which, as I said, I was rather accomplished at. My specialty was the snake. Anyway, I graduated from the Clown College at the top of my class—*magna clown laude*—so naturally I ran off and joined the circus. (*interjects*) You look like a Jew!

■ **What was the circus like?**

■ Are you kidding? Those were the glory days. You know, being a circus clown was once a very noble position. I was following in the footsteps of some truly great fools—Joseph Grimaldi, the guy who invented the slipping on a banana peel gag; Dan Rice, the guy who invented the Uncle Sam slipping on a banana peel gag; Oleg Popov, the guy who made alcoholism and vagrancy funny. Of course you wouldn’t know about this, but in Europe, the circus is like dinner theater, people get all dressed up, they leave their kids at home; it’s like an evening out. Being a circus clown in Europe is like being an opera singer or a concert violinist. In America it’s one step down from claims adjuster, but I considered myself to be more in the European tradition.

■ **So why did you leave the circus?**

■ Well, when you’ve been a clown in the circus for more than nine months they have to pay you union scale. In order to avoid doing that, the cheap sons of bitches will can you or give you a job as the human projectile. That’s why I became a Bozo. Working in the circus may have been a great source of pride, but you can’t eat pride, can you?

■ **What did you have to do to become a Bozo?**

■ First I had to fly out to Los Alamos for the training seminar—“Bozo’s Boot Camp,” as we called it—which is where aspiring Bozos are put through a series of comedic tests and exercises designed to see who has “the right stuff.” The whole thing was supervised by Harmon himself. He had this manual which explained the Bozo philosophy and contained all of Bozo’s regulations, like “never reveal your true identity,” “no inter-Bozo relationships,” and “no smoking, drinking, or cursing, when in costume.” There were all these difficult events, too, like the 500 meter pie fight, but for me the worst part was the “tell us a little bit about yourselves” thing. I hate that. (*yells*) Fuck you! I’ll put your soul in the grave! Harmon used to say, “Don’t just play Bozo, *be* Bozo. Cultivate him. I want you to eat, drink, sleep, and shit Bozo!” After a while, I got so I wouldn’t answer to anything but Bozo, and I started to wear my makeup even when I wasn’t working. Anyway, I landed a job at the franchise in Philadelphia. That was great. I was treated like a star. I was well paid, I had my own dressing room, and don’t print this, but I was something of a Don Juan to a rather large number of the local mothers. You’d be surprised. This one hotty used to call me her “big red one,” and she wasn’t talking about my nose either. (*wiggles suggestively*) That’s off the record, you understand. Those were some good times, though. (*bellows*) I have an erection!

■ **Did you ever have any problems with kids on**

the air? *There's a popular story...*

■ "Cram it clownie!" I love that story! Bozo supposedly had to discipline a kid who was acting up, and the kid supposedly bit Bozo and told him to "Cram it, clownie!" Then Bozo supposedly lost his temper, swore at the kid and took a swat at him and they had to cut to a commercial! Of course it has no basis in fact, but wherever I go, people swear they saw it! This was before cable, mind you, so I really don't see how these folk myths get started. Somebody should write a book about it. The little shit probably had it coming, though...

■ **What was "Bozo for President" all about?**

■ Oh, that's a good one. In 1972 Harmon ran Bozo for President. His slogan was "Put a real Bozo in the White House," and his platform was that everyone in the world should hold hands and sing, like a Coke commercial: "We love Bozo/ Yes we do/ Bozo is me/ Bozo is you!" Bozo actually managed to rack up about 300,000 write-in votes. It sounds like a joke now, but he was dead serious. He's had his eye on the White House ever since JFK called on him to help with the Head Start program in the early '60s.

■ **Do you think Bozo would have made a good President?**

■ Listen, Larry Harmon's entire career has been nothing but a vehicle for his tireless pursuit of the almighty dollar. I don't think he ever gave a shit about being a clown, it was just the easiest way for him to get rich. (*whoops*) Poop! I've been naughty! He bought the rights to Bozo from Capitol because he saw it as a potential goldmine. I'll bet that he hasn't even appeared in costume, except to merchandise something, for at least 20 years! Of course, his empire is quickly diminishing; Bozo's down to only six markets from 186 in the late 60s, but he's still as enterprising as ever. (*bursts out*) Testicles! His new thing, now that Bozo is practically washed up, is lawsuits. If someone even dreams about using the name Bozo, Harmon'll have him in court before he even wakes up. I wouldn't be surprised if he sues me for saying it. Clowns are supposed to spread joy and laughter, Bozo just spreads litigation.

■ **So do you believe that children's performers have big responsibilities to the kids?**

■ When Bozo started becoming really popular, he was hawking all kinds of products on his show. (*cheers*) Everybody knows that I'm Mr. Jism! A lot of people found Bozo's hard-sell techniques a little distasteful. Somebody's mom raised a big stink about it, and that sparked the infamous nationwide smear campaign: "Bozo is a Pimp." That really hurt the old clown's feelings, let me tell you. The whole thing resulted in the FCC creating all these guidelines that require a certain amount of "educational content" in children's shows. So now you've got shows based on toys, or you've got the Ninja Turtles selling their own brand of cereal, and getting away with it because they say "don't play in traffic," or "don't drink drain cleaner." Myself, I don't see any difference.

■ **What do you think of the Pee-Wee Herman**



THE RIGHT TO BE BOZO

In 1932, Thomas Jefferson "Bozo" Williams opened Bozo's Hot Pit Bar-B-Q, in Mason Tennessee. The restaurant thrived, earning itself a reputation for having the best pork Bar-B-Q south of the Mason-Dixon line. In 1982, "Bozo" Williams's daughter Helen, who inherited the business when "Bozo" passed away, wanted to open a second "Bozo's" in Memphis, and put in an application to register the restaurant's name.

When the not-so-carefree Mr. Larry Harmon caught wind of this, he notified his lawyers that he intended to challenge Mrs. Williams's application. Harmon's lawyers argued that if a "little mom and pop business" with a largely local clientele could register their trademark, so could any small business, which would, in effect, paralyze the application process.

Harmon's own motivation seemed to be much more personal, however. He feared that patrons who were unsatisfied with their dining experience would inevitably blame Bozo (the clown, not the man). "If something is wrong, if the food isn't good, or if the silverware is dirty, it's not hurting the restaurant, they're not Bozo. It's like Gertrude Stein said; 'Bozo is Bozo is Bozo is Bozo is Bozo,' and he's not hawking ribs in some shitty little one-horse town!"

Nearly nine years of litigation failed to satisfy Harmon's peculiar sense of justice. Unwilling to accept the decisions of both the District Court and the Court of Appeals, he petitioned the Supreme Court, who refused even to hear his case. Ironically, it has been Harmon's questionable legal zeal that has tarnished the reputation of his "loveable, laughable, beautiful" character, whom regulars at Bozo's refer to simply as "that clown." ■

"inde-cident"?

■ What the hell do I care about Wee-Wee Herman? I've got enough troubles of my own. After I lost my official franchise because of a few on-air Tourette's slips, I tried to go rogue in a homemade suit, but nobody wants a fake Bozo with a mucky mouth. Plus, I just got sick of people laughing at me, and I went insane for a while.

■ **What do you think of the new crop of "negative" clowns? Krusty from The Simpsons, Homey from In Living Color, Flunky the apathetic clown from Late Night with David Letterman, and Pogo, aka John Wayne Gacy?**

■ Oh, they're entertaining at first, but there's been so many of them that "evil clowns" have become even more of a cliché than funny clowns. Anyone who thinks that all that "evil clown" shit is funny should just get piles and die! (*barks*)

Fucky! And I'll be first in line to dance on their graves! (*bawls*) Eat me!

■ **Well what do you have to say about all the clown trappings in rock? KISS, Twisted Sister, W.A.S.P., the Sensational Alex Harvey Band, Split Enz, King Diamond, the Undisputed Truth (the black KISS, on Motown)?**

■ Nothing. I gotta take a whiz!

■ **What about Smokey Robinson's "Tears of a Clown"?**

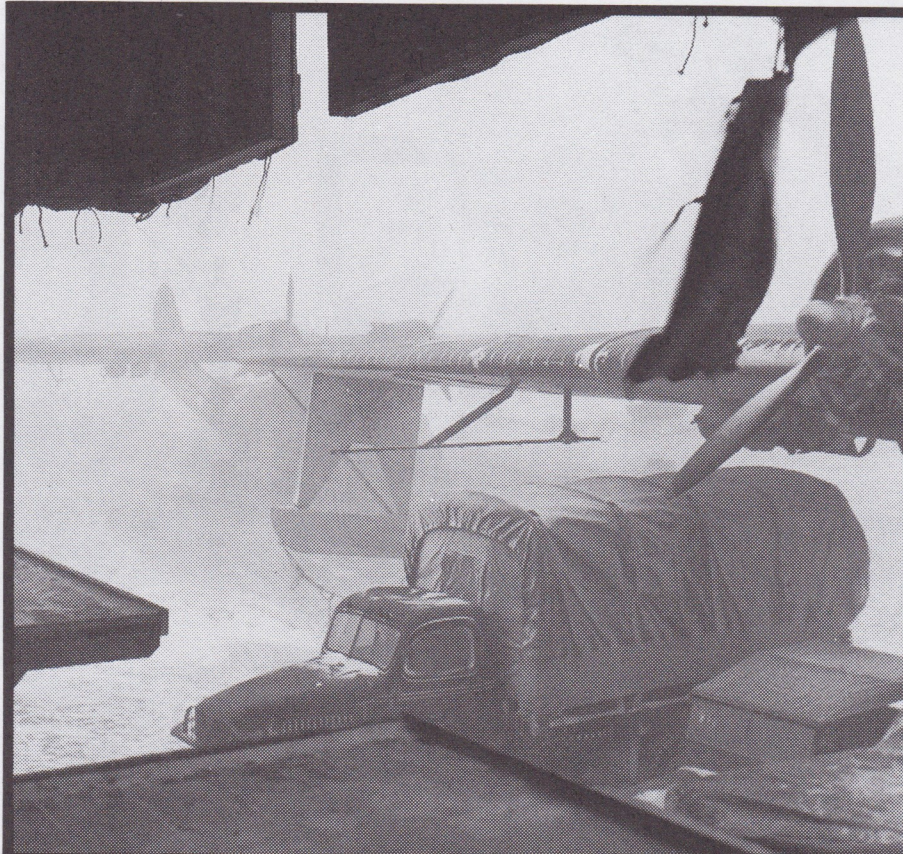
■ I hate that song. See ya!

■ **Wait—what's your opinion of the Bozo Underground?**

■ Where's that?

■ **One more thing—just why do clowns pile in and out of cars?**

■ There's a really interesting story behind that, actually. I'm afraid I don't remember it, but it's really quite a story at that. (*sings*) I love you! ■



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LIKES: Pornography, Sex, Catholic Iconography, Sex, Male Urination, Sex, The Sound of Her Own Voice
DISLIKES: Revisionist Thinking, Lesbians, Ass-Kissing Intellectuals, Hitler
WHY WOMEN HATE HER: They misunderstand her views on rape
WHY MEN LIKE HER: They misunderstand her views on rape
FAVORITE BOOKS: *Oresteia* (Aeschylus), *The Turn of the Screw* (Henry James), *Macho Sluts* (Pat Califia)
QUOTE: "Real men think I'm cute."

This year's brightest rising star doesn't sing for a rock band, doesn't have a hit TV show, and isn't a hot young Hollywood hopeful. She's Camille Paglia, and if you thought you'd never cream for an academe, think again!

You may have read about her in *Playboy*, *Spin*, *Sassy*, *The New Republic*, *The Village Voice*, or *The Wall Street Journal*, or seen her on MTV's *House of Style*. You may have heard your friends mention her name again and again and wondered, just who is this Camille Paglia?

Camille is a popular professor at a very hoity-toity university in Philadelphia, where she's won over the hearts of her students with her "hip" attitudes and her "tough love" approach to teaching! Last year Camille published her very first book, called *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence From Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson*. It was such a hit among educated eggheads that eventually even normal people started to take notice! Within seconds of its release, *Sexual Personae* skyrocketed to the top of the *New York Times* Best Sellers List. Soon everybody everywhere was cooing over Camille!

While Naomi Wolf has called Camille "the nipple-pierced person's Phyllis Schlafly," we like to think of her as "the Don Rickles of the literati!" Her down-to-earth, common sense attitudes have made her the best-loved philosopher since The Professor from *Gilligan's Island*! Her comments on such trendy subjects as rape ("Lighten up!"), feminism ("Fuck it!"), pornography ("Hubba hubba!"), prostitution ("If it doesn't cost money, it's not worth having!"), and of course sex ("I'm tri-sexual. I'll try anything, as long as it's sexual!") have struck a chord with regular people the world over! When she isn't busy doing personal appearances, endless photo shoots, or going through bagsfull of fan mail (she reads them all, honest!), Camille spends most of her free time writing! Right now she's hard at work putting the finishing touches on her next book, *Hot For Teacher*, which promises to make her absolutely huge! *Hot For Teacher* is going to be much more personal than *Sexual Personae*, and will cover a variety of topics from Freud to football! (A publishing insider tells us that one

whole chapter of *Hot For Teacher* is a lengthy study of George Carlin's Football vs. Baseball routine, which Camille compares to Nietzsche's take on Dionysius vs. Apollo!) Already top celebrities like Dennis Miller and Courtney Love have been clamoring over Camille, hoping to curry enough favor to earn a mention in her new book!

Camille's fame doesn't stop her from being one of the nicest people you're ever likely to meet—that is, if you're ever lucky enough to actually meet her! It's no wonder everyone loves her ideas, but what about Camille—the person? It would take practically a whole magazine to list all of Camille's positive qualities, so here's the short list!

SHE'S SMART!

Her book is over 700 pages long, and according to people who've actually read it, it's jam-packed with literary references, artistic allusions, and tons more brainy stuff like that! Number one fan Lauren Hutton admits "I thought Camille's book was brilliant . . . at least the nine pages I've read." What's more, Camille knows the inside poop on who killed JFK!

SHE'S FUNNY!

Although her book is pretty serious over all, Camille's unique sense of humor inevitably comes through. *Sexual Personae* is full of one-liners like "The Rolling Stones are the greatest rock band in the world!"

SHE'S NO SNOB!

Camille loves art and literature and all that, but she's not as stuck up as you might expect! She loves TV, rock music, and fashion mags too! "There's as much truth and beauty in *Elle* as in Eliot," she says, "Read Gogol, wear Gaultier!"

SHE'S INDEPENDENT!

Camille is personable and loves to chat, but, like Onan of antiquity, she needs to spend quality time with herself!

SHE'S A CUT-UP!

Camille is a real card. She's been known to plant whoopie cushions, give hand-buzzer jobs and glue Rubik's Cubes together. Once she even sabotaged a colleague's article, replacing

the word "epistemology" with the word "buttmeat" wherever it appeared!

SHE'S IN WITH THE IN CROWD!

Since Camille has done so much to make them all seem really important, the "beautiful people" have welcomed her into their ranks! They enjoy her rapier-like wit, and they love to listen to her trope-laden discourses on the value of their work, even if they can scarcely understand a word she says! Camille has scored points with everyone from Madonna to Nirvana, and enjoys hanging out backstage at their "neo-pagan" concerts! She is also a close personal friend of Big Apple funny-man David Brenner!

SHE'S A REAL SWEETHEART!

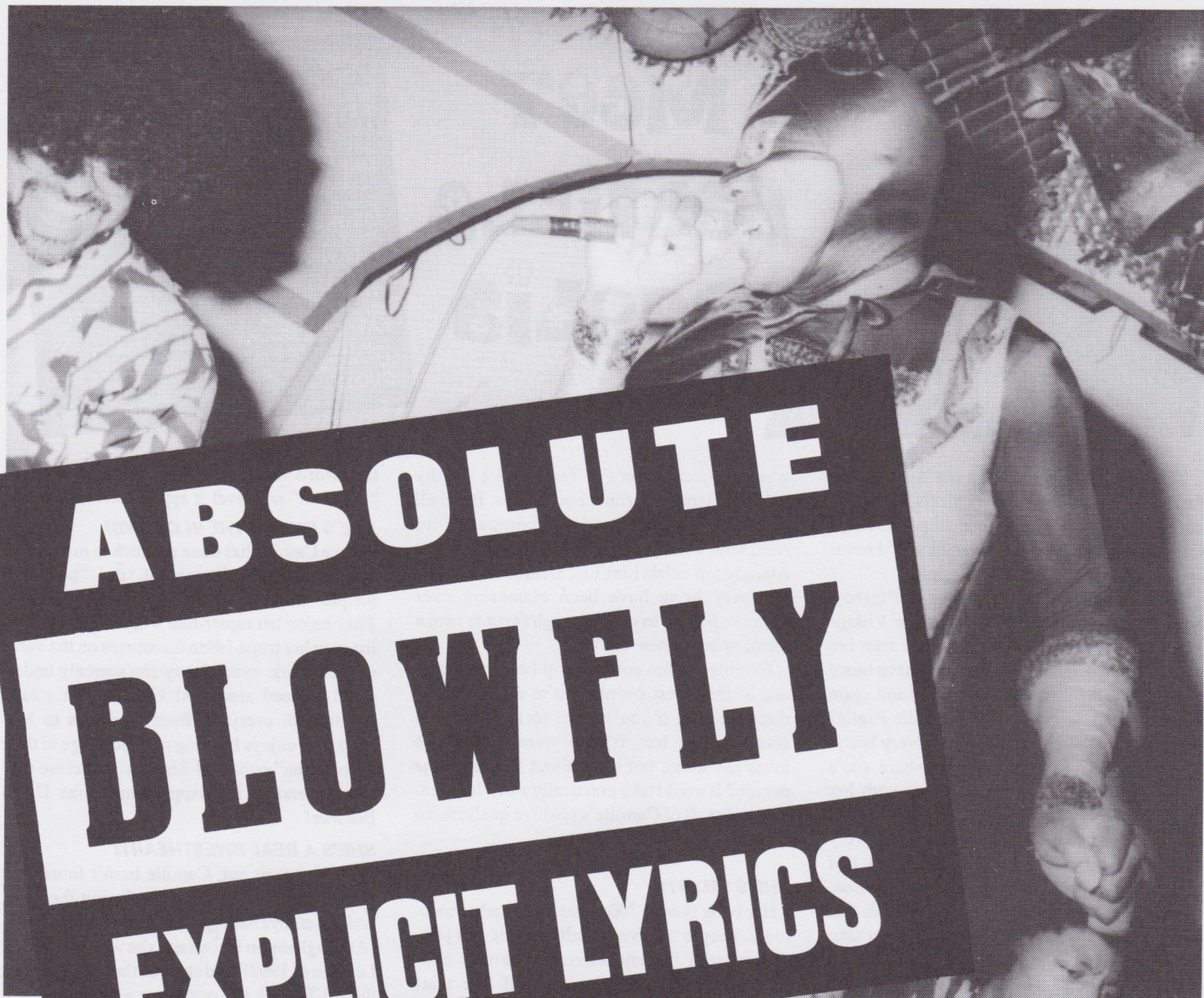
Believe it or not, Camille hasn't found that special someone! She's still playing the field, and she enjoys batting on both sides of the plate! (At Binghamton University she was voted Miss Lesbian of 1968! And she was the only Sapphist there!) Though she may have a reputation as a scrapper ("Men are simple," she says "There's nothing they understand better than a swift kick in the nuts!"), Camille is a real romantic at heart! Her ideal date includes a side of beef, a bottle of fine vino, a little romantic music (Luther is a particular fave), and an array of *Dead Ringers*-style love toys to spice up the evening!

SHE'S ONE OF THE GUYS!

Although she fancies herself a feminist, Camille loves men, especially if they're gay! A self proclaimed "fag trapped in a woman's body," Camille knows that men are responsible for many of civilization's greatest achievements: toxic waste, beer hats, tractor pulls, and breast implants, just to name a few. Camille identifies with the way men brashly assert their sexuality, and she really, really loves the Dice-man

SHE LOVES LIFE!

More than one reviewer has written of Camille's "bubbly optimism," and that's not strictly limited to her writing, which is sprinkled with gems like "Everyone has killed in order to live. Each generation drives its plow over the bones of the dead." ■



ABSOLUTE

BLOWFLY

EXPLICIT LYRICS

Although Clarence Reid, writer/producer for Miami-based TK Records, has written hits for Wilson Pickett and KC and the Sunshine Band, he has remained relatively unknown throughout his 30 year career. However, as his X-rated alter-ego, Blowfly, he has released over 40 albums of potty-mouthed parodies of popular songs on a string of outrageously obscure labels, and is even less well-known. Nattily clad in skin-tight sequined pimping slacks, menses-red cape and last Halloween's Johnny Locust mask, Blowfly is a scatological superhero, a hysterical and heavy-dicked hybrid of Handi-man, Starchild and Superfly. The father of "as nasty as I wannabe" comedy set to music and two sons named Clarence Jr., Bowfly was rapping raw and dirty years before Luke Campbell even knew the meaning of the word "mung." MOTORBOOTY recently phoned him at his boudoir, as his royal weirdness didn't much feel like getting out of bed.

■ **MOTORBOOTY: One question: why?**

■ **BLOWFLY:** The best place to start is from the beginning. I was born in Georgia, but I moved to West Palm Beach when I was young. I used to go back to visit my grandmother. She lived in this part of the country where the only radio you could get was hillbilly stations. In hillbilly, you'll find some of the best lyrics and morals. I used to listen to Homer and Jethro, and they would rap most of the time, only they didn't call it "rap" then. They called it "soul talkin'." As a form of revenge, I would take songs like "The Twist," and I would change it from (sings) "Come on baby, let's do the twist" to "Come on baby, and suck my dick!" My grandma would say, "That's terrible, you're a poor excuse for a human being. You're no more than a blowfly." Now what the hell is a blowfly? So I looked it up in a book: a blowfly is a certain fly. Not all flies lay eggs, but a blowfly lays eggs that turn into maggots and eat dead things. (*blowfly n* : "Any

of several flies of the family Calliphoridae that deposit their eggs in carcasses or carrion or in open sores and wounds"—Webster's) I was really mad when I found that out. So I started calling myself Blowfly and she'd say, "Yeah, that's what he is too, a damn blowfly."

■ **Let's talk about the early records.**

■ In 1963 I wrote "Oddballs." It was the first rap that I could remember, 'cause wasn't nobody doin' rap: (yells) "Somewhere in this land/ a woman and a man sneaks into the woods/ I bet they're up to no good/ Why? Nobody knows/ except that's where the elephant goes/ where the woods are thick/ 'cause that's where they get their kicks/ It seems very odd, you can hardly tell 'em apart/ with a guy named Mitch and a bitch named Stitch/ but which learned to switch/ they're known as the oddballs/ the oddballs/ they're always having a ball." It was about hippies, of course—the oddballs. You couldn't tell the hippies from girls then. So the company said, "It's a piece of shit, we don't want you talking, we want you to sing." So in 1964 I wrote "Blowfly's Rap": (croons) "I know you heard



PHOTOS BY PAT BLASHILL

about Superman/ when he gets horny he uses his hand." They didn't like that either. In the mid '70s the Sugarhill Gang did "Rapper's Delight" and the record company said, "Wait a minute, didn't you hand us something like that?" I said, "Sure, about 10 years ago. You all said it was a piece of shit." So they dug it up and we changed it to "Rap Dirty." All I did was add Muhammad Ali and Skip Stephenson and stuff about truckers. In 1966, I did "Shittin' On The Dock On The Bay" and Burt Bacharach's "Rain Drops Keep Fallin' On My Head": (*whimpers*) "My baby keeps fartin' in my face/I guess that means I got my face in the wrong damn place." ("Raindrops" was released on the soundtrack to Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid in 1969 -ed.) Then I did *Blowfly* on T.V.

■ **That record sounds like a wild party.**

■ It was. Musicians would love to work with me 'cause I brought dirty books to the sessions to get them in the mood. I would start a session and we would just cut until it was finished—live and everything. Whenever I'm cuttin' *Blowfly* I need background noise, so I'd tell everybody,

"I'm startin' *Blowfly* about three o'clock, so all of you who don't know any better, come by. All you got to do is clap and holler and fart and curse and make noise like a party." We'd just put mikes everywhere and everybody would participate. Even the boss's daughter wound up topless on the album cover. It was just like a family because by the end of the day everyone was drunk and fighting.

■ **Did you ever get hassled over lyrics like the 2 Live Crew?**

■ Yeah. I got much more trouble than they ever did. They're friends of mine, but their shit isn't as nasty as mine, and it sure isn't as funny. I mean anybody can be nasty, but you got to be funny with it. I'm funny. (*In British accent*) "My breath just don't smell right/I wonder who did I eat last night." I can't help but to laugh at that.

■ **Did you benefit as much as the 2 Live Crew from that kind of...**

■ Now, I'll talk, you listen. Back in the day, they'd put a clean record on one side, an X-rated record on the other. So if you was a Catholic and had a 10-year-old daughter and she asked,

"Daddy, can I buy this?" and you say, "Let me hear it," and it's a clean rap record by the 2 Live Crew, you'd say, "Sure honey, go ahead and buy it." And one day you're home playing cards with the priest and you hear all this shit comin' out, (*Peter Lorre voice*) "Me so horny, me love you long time," and "dick" and "poop" and all that shit and you're embarrassed you let your daughter buy it. Most of my records was for young people. Other than Batman, I was the first to start off with a mask. I used to just wear this tuxedo like Dracula or this buttless Clint Eastwood get-up, but kids were frightened by it. So we had to redo it with this flashy silver stuff and the gold stuff and shiny fit tights, 'cause girls want to know how I'm built and all that shit. If you're out there to please the public, you got to please the public. I know that people who've never heard music before are bound to love me.

■ **Right.**

■ I cut this album called *Blowfly's Disco*, because disco was king. It had "Who Did I Eat Last Night?" and "What A Difference A Lay Makes" and they did a half-page spread on it in *Playboy*.



I don't know how they got the record, 'cause we didn't want too much publicity on Blowfly. We knew we were going to get our asses sued because we did a lot of other people's shit. *Rolling Stone* was talking about "The guy that's got more balls than anybody else in the world. Listen to what he do to 'What A Difference A Day Makes.'" And the guy who wrote that song happened to be the president of ASCAP. Everybody started to listen and wanted to know who this nigger is in Miami who's fuckin' with people's songs. It became real big and the guy sued us. Then the jury said, "Hold on, let's take a recess and listen to the shit ourselves." I knew I was in trouble then. In about 45 minutes they came out and said, "You almost killed the old guy." Then they told me, "Write your own dirty shit. Stop messin' up other people's shit." Then everybody wanted to know about Blowfly, but I had to cool it for a year or two, you know, wait for the lawsuit to cool down.

■ **So what did the lawsuit. . .**

■ We had to spend about 30, 40 grand, but that was a slap on the wrist compared to what they could have done to us. They could have fucked us in the ass and made sausage out of us and there wouldn't have been no more Blowfly. But the guy saw that I was a serious writer, and after that he tried to force me into ASCAP. He saw that I had written songs like "The Girls Can't Do What the Boys Do and Still Be A Lady," meaning that girls who try to get revenge on boys by going out

with other boys only end up being sluts. You know, I was always like that, trying to help keep kids out of trouble and stuff like that. "Girls, don't rush down the road of love with your heart. Take your time. You can be a ho forever, but you can only be a virgin once, so keep it as long as you can." So the guy was really into me when he came to court. He knew even at that time that I was the only one who never smoked, never drank, and never used drugs. Whenever I'd come around, these high school kids would say, "What the hell is Blowfly doing here, he's not that nasty and he's never even used drugs." I always said, "I'm the one that's more important than you freaks. I've never used drugs, and I don't have to go to high school, so I can kick ass!"

■ **Do you consider yourself the original rapper?**

■ I'm the first one who did it to contemporary black music, but like I said, I used to get my ideas from Homer and Jethro and those old hillbilly records. (*James Mason voice*) "Smoke that cigarette/ smoke smoke smoke it till you smoke yourself to death/ Tell St. Peter at the Pearly Gate that/ uh somethin' somethin' I just can't wait/ I just got to have another cigarette." It was about smokin' back in the '50s. Lots of musicians talk about rap coming from jazz, but that's a lot of bullshit. Jazz scattin' has musical notes. Rap has no notes. You got a lot of groups saying (*plodding imitation of Nipsey Russell*) "Dum

dum dum dum dum" That's not rapping. Rapping is taken from the word "rapid," which means "fast" (*proceeds to rap/scat rapidly à la Ella Fitzgerald*) "This is Blowfly the master of class/ gonna sock some soul to yo motherfuckin' ass/ Boys and girls. . ." (*begins to rap so rapidly I start to feel sick to my pants*). That's "Rap Dirty." It was big. It made the pop charts.

■ **What do you think about the controversy over sampling?**

■ Well, if you notice, you never heard no samples on Blowfly. That's like M.C. Hammer coming into your house, making love to your wife, and takin' your family and using them to do something funny. At least get permission to borrow them. I'm going to do "Soul Power," but I ain't going to sample it, I'm going to do it as a tribute to the King, James Brown. On the flip side I'd do it "Hole Power" or something like that. Rap is a bunch of bullshit. I never liked to use people. If I got a weakness, it's about paying people too much or treating people too good. The image on stage is Blowfly is a real mother-fucker, but I've always been good to people because my grandmother would castrate my balls if I didn't.

When I appear in person, people always want to hear me mess up other people's songs, 'cause they know I can do it on the spot. Like Luther Vandross's "Somebody Huggin' In the Night." (*Freddie Jackson voice*) "Enough room in there for me 'cause I'm well hung/ so I won't have to use my tongue." And they just cracked up. But that's always come easy to me. I'd sit on my grandmother and mess up people's songs and sing it real loud and go, (*Mahalia Jackson voice*) "They tried to tell us we're too hung." You know, whites always say black guys have the biggest dicks, which isn't always the case. I found out it was a big lie when I was on the road, 'cause some of the white guys who were always whipping it out made me look like a little kid.

■ **What do you think about all of the embarrassing white bands who try to play funk?**

■ I think it's great. In the '50s and '60s the white guys would cover the black guys' stuff, but they weren't shit. What they had on us was the connections. They could get it played and they did that shit in tune. A lot of blacks don't want to admit it, but we did a lot of it out of tune. We did it soulful, but they did that shit in tune. If you listen to a lot of those black records, the Moon-glows and the rest of that shit, even a lot of the Beatles stuff, there's a lot of out-of-tune vocals. The Beatles could get away with it because they had accents. But Lord, they couldn't dance. If whites tried to dance against black bands, it was no contest 'cause we had the rhythm. But in the '80s, forget it. You got white guys, white girls that can sing, that would kick our ass on stage.

■ **Are you kidding?**

■ Have you heard of my movie, *The Twisted World of Blowfly*? Instead of going around trying to be funny, I just do the natural shit that I do as Blowfly. You know, I come to LA and I got a two-foot-tall dwarf as a bodyguard against



all these big old street gangs. It's funny. It rocks from one thing right into the other. There's this beautiful chick with no bra, just panties. Any normal, red-blooded guy would fuck her. But not Blowfly. I look in my suitcase and I pull out a butt plug. I don't like that, so I pull out a dildo, K-Y Jelly®, Vaseline®, and finally settle on an electric grill with a dick on the end of it. When you plug it in, it spins around. There's a Barbara Walters lookalike, Barbara Alters, interviewing me on TV. She's completely weird and nasty and the interview is me standin' on the corner talking to two chicks and this dwarf is pullin' on my leg and I says, "What the fuck do you want with me now," and he points to my pants leg, and my dick has come off and we chase it down Hollywood Boulevard.

■ *Sounds like a hoot. Have you ever heard Richard Pryor?*

■ Hey, did I tell you my birthday is next month? I was born at high noon on Valentine's Day. Maybe I'll do something weird like have the cheerleaders at the University of Miami shit in a tub and mail it to me on my birthday.

■ *It doesn't seem likely that it would make it through the mail.*

■ Who cares, man? When I started there were a bunch of comedy albums, but they was all stand-up comedians. I was the first guy to put music to it. When I was doing the "Watch This Sucka Revue" with Rudy Ray Moore, Aunt Esther, Redd Foxx, Wild Man Steve, and all of them, I drew a certain amount of people that they wouldn't get otherwise 'cause I had a younger set with the music. I could do stand-up comedy, like telling the guys how to tell which girl got a

tight pussy by crawling up to the bathroom and putting your ear to the wall and listening to the sound of the piss. That would tell you how big the hole that it come out of was. Of course, Redd Foxx and Aunt Esther were bigger names than I was, but in those days, who wasn't? People came to me because I did so many different things. If I had a message for the rappers today, I'd tell them to try to learn a few music notes too. It'll be like it was in the '70s when disco went out. Sixty percent of the artists started starving, 'cause they couldn't do nothing but disco. I used to tell KC, "Learn to phrase and learn to do something besides dance like a fairy."

■ *Does it bother you that you never made it as big as some of your contemporaries?*

■ Only every damn day.

■ *Do you think . . .*

■ Fuck Redd Foxx. I'm funnier than he ever was.

■ *. . . you've gotten your due respect from this generation of rappers?*

■ I think the problem with me was that what I did best didn't mean that much to me. I used to say, Blowfly comes from Clarence Reid, but I think Clarence Reid came from Blowfly. Even as a kid I always would do lyrics. Everybody else would chase girls at football games or go to the movies. If I saw somebody with an old piece of piano with at least two good notes on it, that's where you'd find me. It didn't mean too much until I went to Germany and found out that people over there knew me, and when I came to LA, some of the recovering alcoholic movie stars remembered me from way back, talkin' about how they had to go to the pantry to play my

shit because their daddy would hang 'em if they got caught listening to that shit. I was a legend back then, but I didn't know it. I wasn't the type of guy who had to be a big star. If I did, beautiful, if not, well . . .

■ *Why do you think you're so popular in Germany? It doesn't seem like your humor would translate very well into Schwäbisch?*

■ Every word I say that's dirty, the kids know what I'm talkin' about. I would draw the girls a heart with an arrow through it sayin' "From Blowfly, To my sweet lady," and I would draw the boys a big dick dripping juice. The girls were pissed. They didn't like that little girl treatment. So I had to draw 'em another heart, only this time I put a dick through it, 'cause that's the way they wanted it. On radio over there, they play my records. As long as I don't say *hosenscheisser* or *ficht* or something in German they don't care.

■ *Your music is nasty, yet you seem like such a nice guy. Is this a front?*

■ Well, it's 'cause I never talk dirty off stage. I cater to a younger set. I've always got a bunch of youngsters hanging around me. The guys down on the corner want to smoke pot and tell you it's bad. Instead of saying, "It's wrong, it's the devil's dick," I just tell 'em the truth: "It's up to you, but remember, nobody before you has been able to handle it, so what makes you so special?" Look at Len Bias. Sly Stone, who could stop riots just by raising his hand, ain't shit now. He's stealing just to keep his habit. So, if you want to be like them, then use it.

■ *Gee. Any last words?*

■ Look out America, Blowfly is back, and he's beautiful! ■

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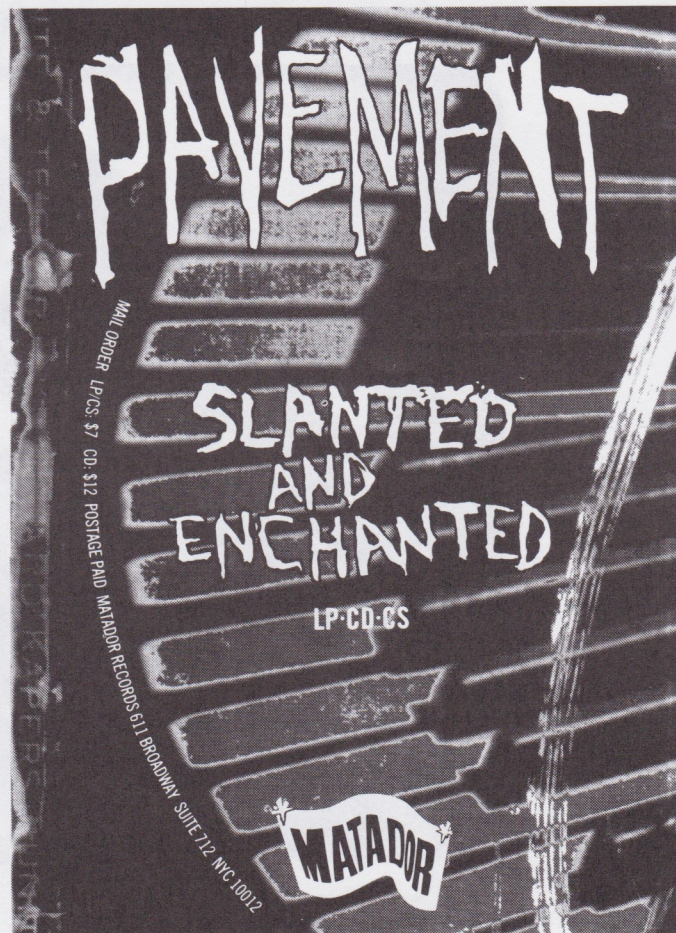
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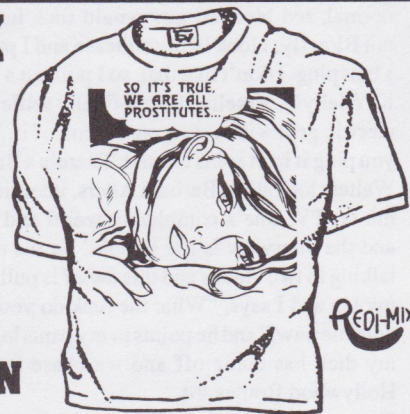
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Since they were once as well-loved as the Knack, Pink Lady, or Clara Peller, you may know quite a bit about the Beastie Boys. You've read that one of 'em used to date Molly Ringwald, probably heard that Mike D. is the Mikey of LIFE cereal fame, and might have the uncomfortable suspicion that Ad Rock is an actor. What you may not be aware of is that these guys are Milken-like financial conjurers, effortlessly spinning dime-store lanyard into Fifth Avenue dukey rope. As MCA says, "You give my man Mike D. two dollars, and in no time, boom-boom-boom, it's out on the street, turned over a hundred times." Why, Professor Griff might even say it's in their blood. In an uncharacteristically generous mood, both Mike D. and MCA shared some of their secrets, presenting this detailed plan for parlaying our millennial scandal sheet into a powerful entertainment empire.

■ **MIKE D.:** Now let's say we want to jack up the MOTORBOOTY press run, right? The first thing we need to do is to pull in some quick funds. Piece of cake.

■ **MCA:** That's when you get the Cowbird Game goin' on.

■ **MD:** What you do is, go down to Florida and steal a chimp.

■ **MCA:** Then you get a small can of blue paint—maybe a little mettalic sheen—and you paint the chimp. Pull its arms off and add some wings. Make it look exotic-like.

■ **MD:** Put the chimp in a cage and go to where the rich hang out, like the Upper East Side in New York. Make up a name for the chimp. This is a rare. . .

■ **MCA:** . . . Ethiopian Cowbird. Her name is, uh, Dwight.

■ **MD:** And all of a sudden . . .

■ **MCA:** . . . Bing-bang-boom—turnin' over Cowbirds—cash money.

■ **MD:** You're selling those Cowbirds that you made from stolen chimps for two, three hundred dollars.

■ **MCA:** Then you hit the Diamond District.

■ **MD:** That's right. The jewelery district. Then you can really rock it, because people there are already in a buying mood, and they don't want to miss out on a bargain. We'll look like bums, so they'll just assume it's a stolen bird. Then, straight up from the Cowbirds, you get into trading for guns.

■ **MCA:** Guns for blow.

■ **MD:** That's kind of inseperable. The Cowbirds, the guns, the blow. That market is the same people.

■ **MD:** Now what can we do with MOTORBOOTY? You guys have a couple of people doing everything, so what we'll do is we'll diversify, right? That's when we'll start to get all the money from all the different areas other than the magazine. You guys will be selling more 40-o's than Ice Cube. Oh man. It's like boom-boom-boom!

■ **MCA:** In the back of the magazine you'll catalogue all the stuff to send away for . . .



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■ **MD:** Start doing a little advertising here and there in the magazine. The MOTORBOOTY Tour Jacket.

■ **MCA:** Sell a couple kilos of blow and before you know it—BINGO!

■ **MD:** BOOM!

■ **MCA:** Move a couple keys. Send D. out on the street for you for a couple days, and pretty soon you'll be tradin' guns for blow.

■ **MD:** And after the guns for blow thing, that's when you get Tom Wu and his money making techniques involved. Tom has a TV campaign

going. He may as well be his own network, that's how much time he buys. Tom's pitch is, "If you don't have the guts to get rich, you deserve to stay poor." A lot of people don't realize that Tom Wu and I started out around the same time.

■ **MCA:** That's when I still had the dog-washing business. So while you've got the Tom thing going on, don't forget that you can keep turning dollars around through a little odds making. Taking bets on *Star Search*, *America's Funniest Home Videos*, that kind of thing, even my man Mike D.'s occasional fist fight.

■ **MD:** What a lot of people don't know is I've had my differences—ok, my violent clashes—with Mike Stipe. The guy tries to play it off like he's a pacifist, but I got to say, when I ran into him at that airport and fists started flailing, he didn't seem too passive to me. I'd like to see him go on MTV and wear a t-shirt saying, "Stop airport violence".

■ **MCA:** I was actually taking even bets on the fight and the end result was in Mr. Diamond's favor. I will say that I did quite well monetarily, and then I took it out on the street and boom-boom-boom...

■ **MD:** Now I myself am actually taking bets on when we tour Europe—there's a battle brewing up between the two bass players from Ned's Atomic Dustbin Band vs. MCA. I'm willing to bet the entire gross of our tour, which won't be a lot of money, but I'll bet it all on my man MCA, taking those two guys out.

■ **MCA:** Mike's theory is that I can use the bass fuzz Terminator-style and wax those guys right off the box. But that's mainly Mike's theory.

■ **MD:** Finally, after you've learned all you can from Tom Wu, done the Cowbird thing, the guns, the blow, the betting, when you're at the top, you get the MOTORBOOTY TV Course on how to . . .

■ **MCA:** . . . Make Cowbirds out of chimps.

■ **MD:** Actually, MOTORBOOTY TV would not be too far off from our TV show, which will be a variety, seminar, political open view, talk, entertainment, and musical hour. Most weeks, we could be the musical guests ourselves. Back in the day, we used to do once-a-month cabaret, and do a different band every month. One month we'd do Five Piece Chicken Dinner, our country band, the next month we'd do the Three Bad Jewish Brothers, a Yiddish rap band. That's the variety portion of the show. We'll get to the point where we will be able to spare people the agony of advertising 'cause we'll be makin' money so many other ways. I think we could be commercial-free. We're going to be part record club too. We'll definitely have the guys from the Freedom Rock commercial as guests during the record auction. We'll auction Curtis Mayfield's *Roots* album, play a couple cuts over the air, and Boom! By the time the show's over, that copy would probably be up to a hundred bucks.

■ **MCA:** Mike is a mastermind. It's a privilege to watch Mike think. Some people would say we should be paying him, and Mike would say so, too. ■



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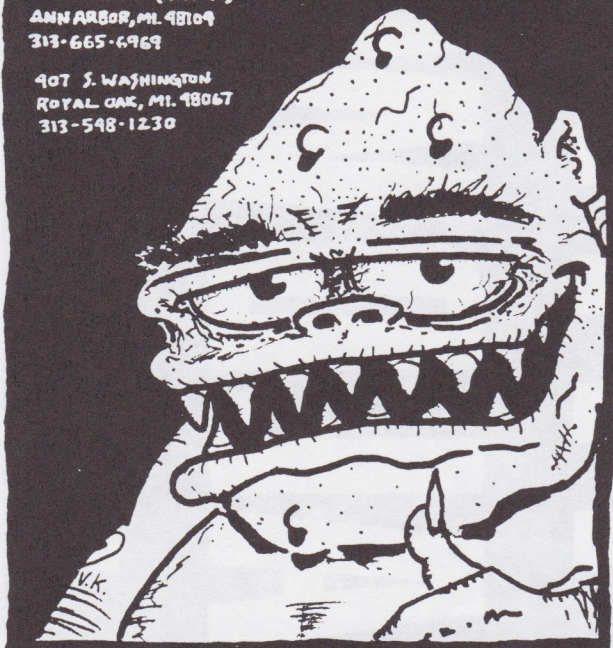
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CRAIG BALDWIN

BY DANNY PLOTNICK



For 20 years, gadfly Craig Baldwin has been making no-budget films out of his San Francisco home/moviehouse/hobby shop, earning a reputation as the court jester of found-footage film. Foraging through garbage cans and dusty closets and pillaging all that lies in the public domain, Baldwin has warehoused one of the most wack collections of slug and second-hand footage this side of Bruce Conner. Baldwin constructs subtly subversive film collages that blur "arty" art, party art, politics, fact and fiction. His latest film, *Tribulation 99: Alien Anomalies Under America*, presents a thoroughly warped theory of U.S. foreign policy in Central America: that it has been dictated by aliens scampering beneath the continent. Using celluloid flotsam like clips of *Blacula* to represent Grenada's Maurice Bishop and the *Wolfman* to double for Manuel Noriega, Baldwin rearranges a choice selection of newsreel footage, propaganda films, educational reels, commercials, and sci-fi thrillers that plays against a hilarious and disturbing paranoid left-wing rant (couched in a paranoid right-wing voiceover) outlining the extraterrestrial connection to the CIA decision making process in step-by-step form.

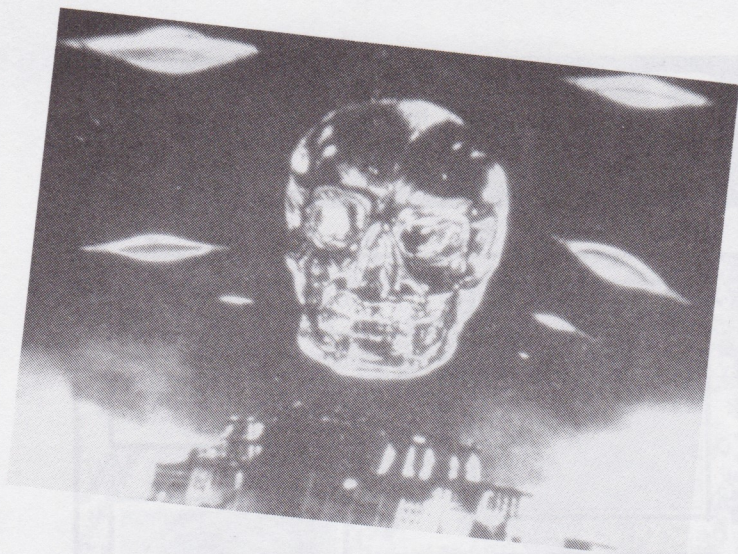
■ **MOTORBOOTY: Why . . . ?**

■ **BALDWIN:** Why do I make found-footage films? It wasn't a conscious decision, it just fit my lifestyle because I'm completely and absolutely impoverished. Everything I have on is second-hand, everything I live in is second-hand. Ever since I moved out of my parents' house I've been living in old houses and creating spaces out of basements and garages. I don't see any need to go downtown and knock down a bunch of beautiful old buildings and make a bunch of condominiums that will eventually be vacant. We can make an old church into a theater or a disco or anything, creating our own meaning within the space. The use, the meaning, the function of things—that's a human decision that people can make. Things aren't always what they seem, and they can be used for other purposes—like if I drank out of a goddamn shoe! *Cinema Pauvre* is what I call it, the ability to make art with limited means. I like the built-in critique of found footage, and I like the idea of attacking the image makers, the dominant people who are foisting a lot of misrepresentations and lies on us. I hate those people and I want to do whatever I can to turn their images against themselves and destroy the meaning that they attach to their images, because not only are they doing a disservice, but I feel that I've been a victim of it somehow. I think there should be the so-called artist's hand in there, to cut through the bullshit and not so much turn things around as mess them up. That's easier to do with found footage.

■ **It seems as though you have a pretty bad attitude towards conventional filmmaking.**

■ Well, yeah, I hate to use the word "anti-art", but the films do have a very "smartass" attitude about the "official canon." I've studied in film art schools. I've studied the general history of film as well as the history of

Visionary, paranoiac... ...or simple NUT CASE?



avant-garde film. I certainly hope that avant-garde films will remain part of every curriculum, but they lose their vitality and resonance if they take on an aura of preciousness, I think. You see, those kinds of film experiments arose from young dirty outsiders, working in basements and garages, cutting corners and doing things differently from the Hollywood system. Later their work became canonized and mystified as the so-called "experimental" film form. Placed in the proper context, those kind of expressions represent an attack on a kind of middle class bourgeois conformist sensibility. The art world, in my mind, is just another category created by the so-called "establishment" to ghettoize and rationalize and co-opt anything that is possibly dangerous. I'd just as soon take it out of that safe little area, the four white walls of a gallery and say yeah, they're beautiful images but they represent my, uh...

■ Punk ethic?

■ It's also to make fun of those images. The images generally used in found-footage films aren't fine art films, don't you know. Using them is like thumbing your nose at film history. If you're an artist, the "rules" are you have to create your own images. So you have these guys digging to the depths of their boring suburban souls trying to recreate their problem with their mother or some meaningless thing, whereas there are a lot of other issues out there that should be talked about. A good way is to bring some popular images into the dialogue, instead of setting yourself apart from popular culture. Basically, it's an acknowledgement of popular culture and an unwillingness to separate yourself from it. I like to see experimental films, scratched films that are just pure texture or pure color, but there's too many more important things going on right now that have to be addressed. Not that I'm a missionary or have to solve all the problems in the world, but I'm willing to go with the high and low and bridge those two worlds.

■ *In Tribulation you combine comedy with politics. Do you think that confuses people? At one level, you have...*

■ Well, not to cut you off, the answer is yes, it does confuse people and I hope that it does. I don't want people to be easily satisfied with one conclusion that I'm supposed to lead them to: "cry now, laugh now." I want it to be confusing because that's the how the world is. To just create a "comedy" or "tragedy" in this Greek "drama" form is a completely oversimplified view of not only the world, but art. If you look at our history—in particular, the CIA—it's a hideous, ugly, horrible, serious thing, but at times it's almost laughable in the degrees to which it goes. If you were to say, "Well, let's just wring our hands about this," you'd be missing another dimension of the experience, which is like this kind of hokey horror movie. Humor, satire, or black comedy can enliven you, while guilt-ridden things tend to drive you into victimization or passivism.

■ *That's what makes activist art and "straight" social documentaries such such a yawn.*

■ Unfortunately, it's true. Not only are people preaching to the converted,

but they're congratulating themselves on feeling sorry for some bad situation, and that's no way out, it's just stroking yourself for having a moral sense. That's great, but you're also supposed to REACT! I think there can be a way of activating people, building a non-hopeless vision, as opposed to this "Oh, woe is me" kind of thing. I think social documentary should be exploding with video and cable and all that, but it's not happening. You see people getting grants, but they tend to repeat this pity and self-congratulation thing. Also, it's very predictable. You can tell when a certain shot's gonna come—the woman's gonna be crying and you're gonna be left with this violin music or whatever. It ultimately becomes boring.

■ *While watching Tribulation you catch yourself laughing at things that maybe you shouldn't be.*

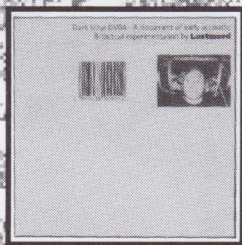
■ There's a little bit of sadism in that, but it's a kind of strategy. One has to reach a certain kind of self-consciousness, which is what you basically described, where you become aware of your own reaction and then you realize that you're a subject to this experience; you're watching a movie. One should feel this same kind of self-consciousness about documentary films. There's a million different representations of Latin America and we should know where we are in relation to them, and not just take them for granted. We should ask "Where does this image come from, and in whose interest was it to portray this in such and such a way?" All these things are constructions. I'm not trying to say I'm the voice of conscience and I've got the ultimate bottom line and when I say, "Feel guilty," you feel guilty. I wanna say, here's the information, you decide if it's true or false, you decide if that's a good...

■ *In Tribulation it's often hard to tell when something's on the level or not...*

■ (Shrieks in horror) Okay, there are a million books already published where this stuff is firmly documented. My intent was more to question the process of coming to know something about news items, and the documentary form itself. There's fact in there, and there's fiction. I didn't expect people to be leaving the theatre more informed. Oh, sure—if they want to they can go to the library and read the million already-published books, but the function of this film is not to convince them that the CIA was overstepping its bounds in Central America, it's to say that United States foreign policy is subject to criticism. We should wonder about where we get our information. I wanted to include enough information to give it a sort of a base, and place it within the documentary structure so you could see that it's based on real investigative journalism. But then it takes off, and it blurs or fades into this area of fantasy where you can see human imagination, vested interest, point of view, and perspective. All those things are engaged with the facts—there's no such thing as an isolated, abstract fact. In other words, the film is less interested in what is actually true or false—though it's mostly true—than in placing you in the world in

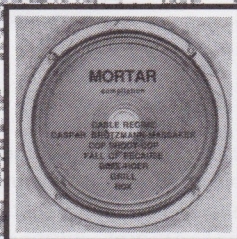
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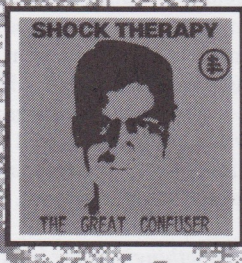
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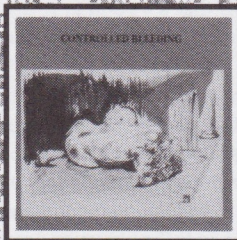
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a new way. When the CIA places articles in the paper, for example, it's just a way to justify foreign policy decisions. I'm saying that you can take the same little bites of information and reconstruct them completely differently. But even this crazed version of the world isn't as crazed as the CIA's. Not nearly as powerful.

■ Or as well-financed.

■ It has to do with that need to find an enemy or project some kind of fear thing. It has to do with manipulating public opinion and creating an enemy. The film points to the fact that there is manipulation going on and you could take any particular fact and situate it within any particular myth. In this case, flying saucers, hollow Earth, Martian dumpsters.

■ Why did you take the sci-fi angle?

■ It's appropriate to the CIA because it has to do with technology, and also, it's completely preposterous. It's fun, and yet it has a double edge to it. The CIA is this huge, overdeveloped instrument of worldwide control and terror. It's like this perfect science fiction monstrosity. It's Frankenstein! I don't need to read some science fiction when I can read about what the CIA really did. It's mind-boggling and it's great cinematic material! We don't have to make "boy meets girl" when we've got real drama that's infinitely more fantastic than science fiction. There are a lot of science fiction movies in *Tribulation*, as well as a lot of stuff from the lunatic fringe of conspiracy theorists, who are consistently into science fiction as a way of explaining the world.

■ The movie seems like the ultimate conspiracy theory.

■ Right. The CIA feeds on conspiracy. In former years it was the communist conspiracy. In the art world we're looking for somebody with a singular vision who gives a glimpse into some larger view, which has less to do with facts than with—I hate to use the word—truth. Sometimes the conspiracy theorists not only point it out but embody it! In the official left/liberal kind of documentary, those kinds of crazoid, uncorrect ideas can't surface—they're taboo, you know.

■ They'll undermine the point somehow.

■ Not only that, it's as if certain images and ideas are dangerous and they shouldn't be shown. I'm giving credit to the audience in saying that they can make their own judgements about what is right or wrong. I'm not into censoring images. I'm willing to acknowledge that there's a lot of different ways of thinking about the universe, but some of them are wrong. There was a film recently called *Blood in the Face* which basically let the KKK and the Nazis speak to the camera and gave them a forum. The filmmakers' thinking was that these people will expose themselves for what they are, that we should know what these people are saying and we should see what the face of racism is. Some people criticized this film for giving voice to Nazis and not placing it in a context. That's an issue I was trying to make fun of and subvert in my own film—those kinds of wild paranoid ideas.

■ Other films of yours use appropriated images as well, like Warhol vs. Rodzianko.

■ I'm the president of a group called ADMAD, Artist's Defense Against Madison Avenue Decadence. I'm interested in popular culture, not just because I can reframe it and sell it as silkscreens for five million dollars, but because I'm part of it and because I think it has all sorts of different effects. Some are reprehensible, like the Camel billboards that are directed at kids: they have a cartoon character selling cigarettes. One of the motivations behind forming this group was to not only acknowledge billboards as something important, which most fine artists would consider beneath them, but also to respond to them. I like to change the billboard—it's the same idea as in found footage—and change the slogan and use it against itself. If I just went up there and said cigarettes are the devil's dick—which is true—so what? It's something we already know. But, if we have Joe Camel saying "Cigarettes are the devil's dick," it might be more convincing.

■ What ... ?

■ What was *RocketKitKongoKit* all about? It actually addresses this critique of the documentary much more than *Tribulation*. We're given all this information and we're forced to make decisions and take actions, yet there are forums that do exist out there. Through the years, certain formulas have come down about how documentaries should be made. There are some good reasons for that—clarity for example. If I were going to make

a driver's education film, should I be arty or ambiguous about it? No. I would try to make people know, for sure, that you drive on the right side of the road. There's a huge audience out there that says "I expect to be enlightened, but I also want to laugh, get turned-on, be surprised, and bawl like a little baby!" You have to engage people. This is a film. It's a fuckin' film, right?

I read an article that was a muckracking kind of thing about a contract signed between a German rocket manufacturer and the nation of Zaire. There are all these Third World developing countries that are willing to lease out one-tenth of their total land area to firms that test rockets. It's like a story out of some cyberpunk novel. So the idea was, I'd make a documentary about Zaire that would start with newsreels. God I love newsreels. If you look at a newsreel, and that's really the heart of a lot of my films, you'll see there are different camera angles, different stocks, different points of view. They'll violate a lot of the "rules" of filmmaking. That's why I like Frank Capra's stuff. A lot of it is newsreel and then they'll come in with some completely different kind of thing like an animation thing or a text—wow, it's a totally new form. It's an essay. It's about ideas. *RocketKitKongoKit* is an attempt to turn this documentary form on its head. It's kind of an art object—but it's a documentary that is consciously subverted into this art object. Newsreels, yeah.

■ *It seems that one of the dangers of the whole video revolution, with video becoming really inexpensive, is that it becomes really easy to shoot without much idea put forth to the construction and usage of footage.*

■ That's such a good question I can't believe it—well, it's not really a question, but I like it anyway.

■ *On your new film, O; No Coranado!, you use live action. How does that work for you?*

■ I just wanted to be able to create my own imagery in a playful way, not in a realistic way. I wanted to create a collision between the past and the present. I wanted to enter the debate about the so-called "500th anniversary of Columbus." It's an appropriate time to retell the story about the Europeans coming here. The quintcentennial commission is going to be sailing the Nina, Pinta and the Santa Maria into San Francisco Harbor, which doesn't make any historical sense, it just shows how absurd it is. My current film will use found-footage and live action in an effort to dramatize some of these events. It's an essay about a conquistador, Coranado—the idea of him, rather than just some events. It's a visual essay about the past and the future and the forces at work—be they colonial forces, in the case of the Spanish, or our American progressive force trying to engage the situation we have now, which is total, complete disregard for treaty rights, complete mismanagement of resources, atomic waste problems—a million things which are so fascinating I can't stand it! One of the reasons why the Spaniards moved north from New Spain, which is now Mexico, was because they believed there were the Seven Cities of Gold, the Seven Cities of Cibola. This was a myth, yet it animated a whole bunch of people. I'm fascinated by the idea that movements in history often originate in the world of fantasy. Look at Christ. It's a myth that has completely seized the lives and imaginations of so many people. I don't put myself above those poor pitiful fools. Stories aren't bad, it's just that everybody listening to the same story could be dangerous, especially if it has to do with one group of people dominating another. The politically correct people thought that the original work-in-progress title for *O; No Coranado!*—*Seven Cities of Slaughter*—was sensationalistic, but why shouldn't it be? The film is sensationalistic. I say, let the gorehounds in! If they want to see some slaughter, I'll show them some goddamn slaughter! I didn't have to invent it, it happened! You're here because of it, so don't forget it, asshole! ■

CRAIG BALDWIN FILMOGRAPHY:

Wild Gunman (20 min, 1978)

Warhol vs. Rodzianko (10 min, 1983)

RocketKitKongoKit (30 min, 1986)

Tribulation 99: Alien Anomalies Under America (48 min, 1991)

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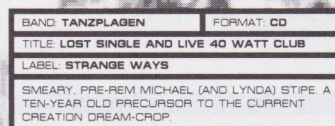
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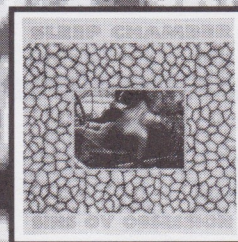
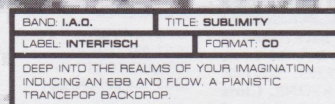
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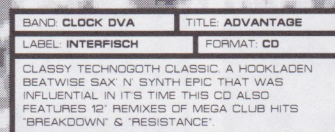
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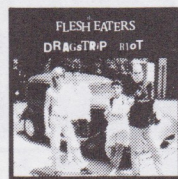
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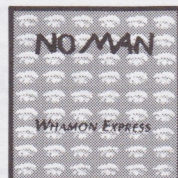
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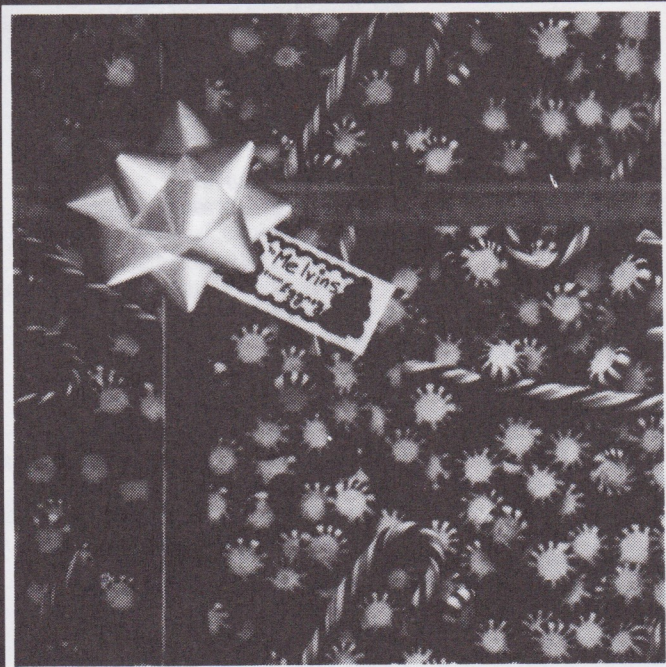
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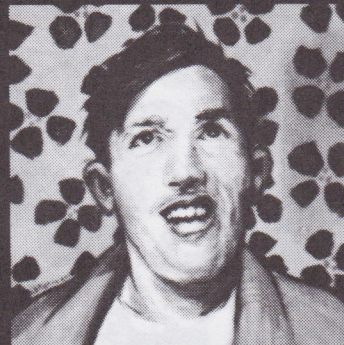
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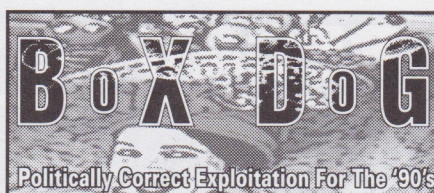
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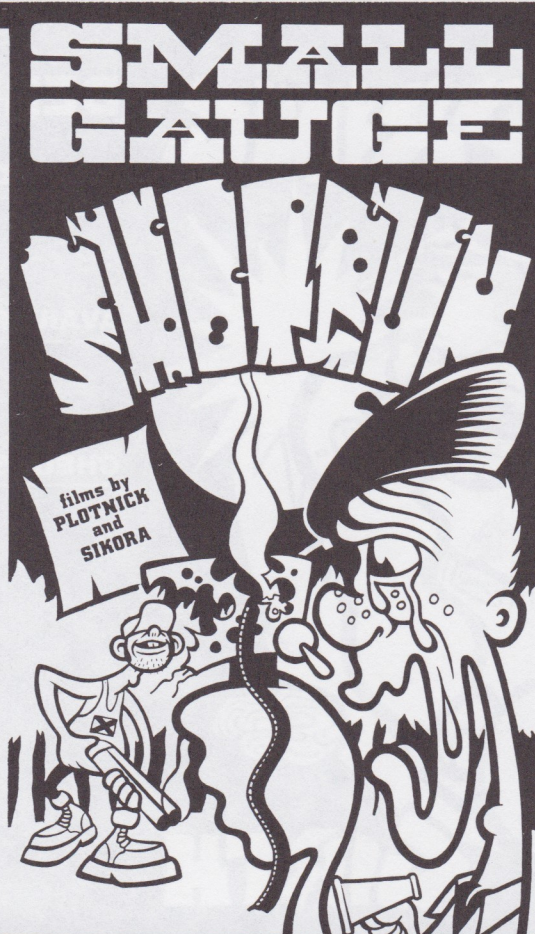
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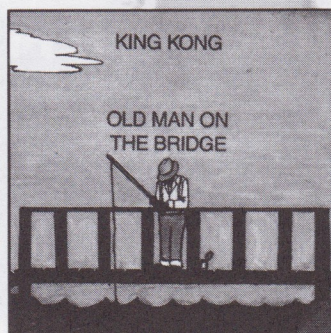
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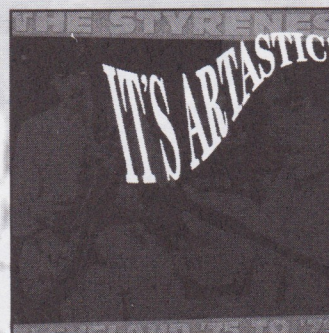


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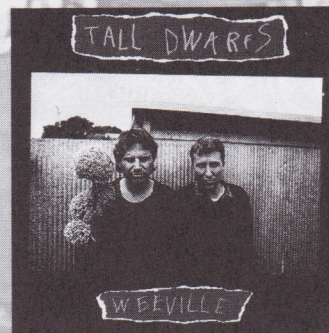


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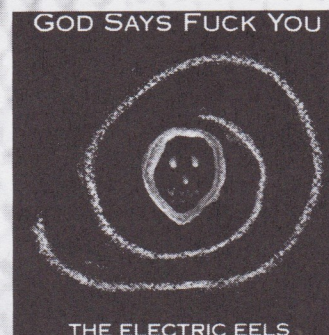
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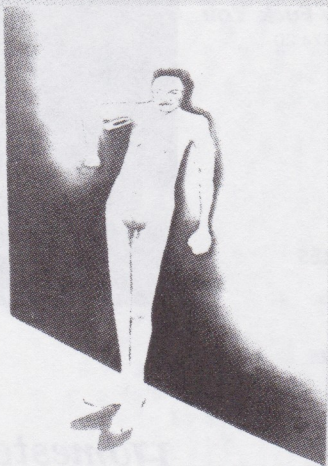
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